Snakeasaur Saga: Quest for Harmony

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Chapters

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1. Prologue

THE SNAKEASAUR SAGA

Written by Tyraka628

QUEST FOR HARMONY

PROLOGUE:

The brilliance of the rising sun shone down upon the realm of Equestria, thanks to the sky clear of clouds. But despite the beautiful day, many ponies were hiding in their houses, not daring to come out should they fall victim to those that would be passing overhead. Today was the legendary day of the great Dragon Migration, when all the dragons in Equestria would journey to an unknown meeting place once every generation; their path would take them directly over Ponyville, and anypony with any concern for their lives didn't want to be outdoors when they arrived.

However, some ponies just found this one in a lifetime chance to be too tempting to pass up.

One such pony was a unicorn who already had some experience with dragons, who was currently at her pegasus friend's house, trying to convince her to join them for this great adventure.

Her fur was lavender-purple in color, while her long mane was a deep plum in color with a pink stripe running horizontally through it, her hair-like mane growing over her forehead in a trimmed look and running down her neck in the same manner, her long tail the same colors and kept in the same style. Her eyes were a purplish-indigo in color, and her cutie mark, the natural marking all ponies have on their flanks, resembled a large red star surrounded by multiple white sparkles.

Her name was Twilight Sparkle, Princess Celestia's personal student, and wielder of the Element of Magic, most powerful of the Elements of Harmony.

"Come on, Fluttershy. It'll be fun."

"There's nothing fun about dragons! Scary? Yes! Fun? No!" Fluttershy whimpered as Rainbow Dash, a fellow pegasus, was dragging her by the tail toward the door. She lost her grip and the vanilla pudding-coloured pegasus made a bolt for it, but didn't get far before the cyan pegasus caught her and push her toward the doors.

Fluttershy was a pegasus pony. Her fur was a gentle-looking creamy yellow in color, like that of vanilla pudding, and her hair was a bright, baby-pink in color. Her mane was even longer than Twilight's, growing down her head and covering part of her face in long, curved locks, her long tail grown and styled in the same manner. Her eyes were an innocent teal-blue in color, and cutie mark was the picture of three pink butterflies.

Rainbow Dash was another pegasus pony, but as different to Fluttershy was day was to night. Her fur was a sharp, bright cyan-blue in color, and her mane was literally a rainbow: it was colored in six stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. Her mane was styled like a spiky, tomboyish mess of hair, the colors of red, orange, and yellow hung just above her eyes and the colors of green, blue, and purple running down her neck. Her long tail, also spiky and messy, looked like a singular rainbow growing from her rear, ending in sharp spikes. Her eyes were a sharp magenta in color, and her cutie mark was a symbol of a grey thundercloud with a rainbow-colored thunderbolt blazing from it.

"But Fluttershy, the great Dragon Migration happens only once in a generation." Twilight tried to reason. "Do you really want to pass up a chance like that?"

"Now that you put it that way, *yes*!" Fluttershy squeaked; now she was holding onto the sides of the doorway with all four of her legs, with Rainbow Dash trying to push her through with all her strength, but having little luck.

With a flash of her magic, Twilight teleported outside the house in front of the yellow pegasus. "Aw, Fluttershy, we just don't want you to miss out." She assured her friend sweetly.

"Miss out on what?" Fluttershy asked, still fighting the battle for safety against her fellow pegasus. "Dragons? Big, scaly, fire-breathing dragons?"

"Well... yeah!"

"Thanks, but... no thanks!"

Rainbow Dash, fed up with trying to push Fluttershy through the door, stopped and tried to 'reason' with her. "Look, Fluttershy, I watched that boring butterfly migration with you..." She said as she held up a picture depicting Fluttershy watching butterflies with binoculars while Rainbow

Dash remained highly bored and irritated. "...So now it's your turn to watch the dragon migration with me! You owe me!"

"I. Said. *NO*!" Fluttershy screamed out and tackled Rainbow towards the ground roughly, even planting her back hooves on her torso harshly; Twilight gasped in surprise before Fluttershy began running towards the window in her home, releasing a high-pitched growl. When she reached it, she lifted up her hooves, looking as if she was actually going to burst open the window...but instead, she lowered herself and gently opened the windows, whimpering as she jumped out.

When Twilight ran toward the window in shock, she saw her running away. She then looked back to see Rainbow Dash lying on the ground in a daze.

"Okay, I guess I'll let you off the hook this time." The cyan-colored pegasus stated.

Twilight couldn't help but smirk as she looked down at her pegasus friend; this kind of craziness was something she was just recently introduced too...but now that she experienced the power and magic of true friendship, she had realized just how foolish she was trying to avoid it.

It happened during the Summer Sun Celebration, a holiday that celebrated Princess Celestia raising the sun to begin a new year. At the time Twilight Sparkle was Celestia's personal student, living in Canterlot; back then, Twilight didn't believe friendship held any use, the intelligent unicorn seeing it as merely a distraction from knowledge. This year would mark the thousandth's year of Celestia's reign, but through her studies, Twilight came across a disturbing prophecy that this year the stars would align with the moon to aid the escape of Nightmare Moon, a dark and evil mare - and Celestia's younger sister - who was banished to the moon a thousand years ago. Knowing this could mean eternal night and doom for Equestria, Twilight informed her teacher of this crisis...only to be told to that she needed to stop reading those old books and get out into the world.

Twilight was then sent to Ponyville with her assistant Spike to oversee the preparations for the Sun Summer Celebration...and to make some friends, much to her great disappointment. She had planned to get the overseeing preparations over with quickly and get back to the town's library that she was staying at to do more research of the Elements of Harmony, the magical relics that would stop Nightmare Moon. But, unfortunate for her studies, she was constantly delayed by the 'crazy ponies' of PonyVille that were so eager to be friendly toward someone new; these included the country-gal Applejack, the tom-boyish Rainbow Dash, the lady-like Rarity, the timid-sweet Fluttershy, and the hyper-active Pinkie Pie.

That night, when Celestia was suppose to raise the sun to celebrate the Summer Sun Celebration, the prochecy came true: the stars aligned perfectly with the moon and Nightmare Moon arrived in Ponyville. She quickly took the power and throne of Equestria, banishing Celestia to the sun and bringing forth Eternal Night, vanishing soon after. Twilight rushed to her library, and there she told Applejack, Fluttershy, Rarity, Pinkie Pie, and Rainbow Dash about the six Elements of Harmony, the first five hidden in the Ancient Palace of the Royal Pony Sisters,

and the six a complete mystery. So the six mares journey deep into the heart of the dreaded Everfree Forest to find the Palace, encountering many dangers and challenges Nightmare Moon set up along the way, but each were conquered by each of the different ponies' positive nature and talents, the six arriving to the palace at last.

Once there, they found the first five elements, but before they could discover the sixth, Nightmare Moon arrived and swept the elements and Twilight to her personal throne in the palace. Twilight confronted Nightmare Moon in a mock-charge, teleporting herself with her magic to where the Elements lay and firing a 'spark' of magic at the five with the hopes that it would reveal the hidden sixth element as legends say. But it failed, and Nightmare Moon shattered the elements with her hooves, declaring that Twilight would never see Princess Celestia or her sun ever again.

The night...would last...*forever!*

But just as it seemed that evil had won, Twilight heard the others calling for her, telling her that they would be there. It was then, deep within Twilight's heart...that the true spark of magic was ignited: the magic of Friendship. She then revealed she had learned the truth to Nightmare Moon and the other mares: the elements of Harmony were not physical objects...they were incarnated in the spirits of herself and the five ponies with her!

Applejack, who reassured Twilight when she was in doubt, represents the spirit of Honesty.

Fluttershy, who tamed the ferocious Manticore with her compassion, represents the spirit of Kindness.

Pinkie Pie, who banished fear by giggling in the face of danger, represents the spirit of Laughter.

Rarity, who calmed a sorrowful sea serpent with a meaningful gift, represents the spirit of Generosity.

Rainbow Dash, who would not abandon her friends for her own personal desires, represents the spirit of Loyalty.

It was then Twilight felt the *true* spark...within her own heart the moment she heard the others calling for her. She realized just how wonderful it was to have them, how great it was to care for them, to be with them...when she realized they were her friends! And when that spark ignited within her, the final element was born: the most powerful of all Elements of Harmony, and the spirit she represented...the Element of Magic!

The six elements combined, the six friends joined together and defeated Nightmare Moon with the Elements of Harmony, destroying the evil monster and releasing Princess Celestia from her celestial prison...as well as purifying Princess Luna from her darkness. Celestia then revealed to a confused Twilight that she was aware of Nightmare Moon's return; she knew Twilight had the magic in her heart to defeat her, but couldn't release it without accepting true friendship into her heart...then it was time for another to do the same. Princess Luna, now freed from the darkness

of jealousy and hatred, reunited with her older sister in a tearful reunion, and celebration filled the land.

Despite the rejoicing, Twilight was downcast; now the adventure was over, she was able to return to her studies in Canterlot...but now she had finally learned how wonderful it was to have friends, and didn't want to leave them. Celestia however, merely smiled and asked Spike to take a letter; she decreed that the unicorn Twilight Sparkle would take on a new mission for Equestria: She would continue to study the magic of friendship, and would write to Celestia her findings from her new home in Ponyville. Thrilled, Twilight thanked the princess greatly, and has been living happily in Ponyville with her friends ever since.

A full year has passed since then, and Twilight and her friends have gone through some crazy adventures together. Not much had changed since that day, other than Celestia decreeing, after a rather bizzare incident with Twilight not finding anything about friendship, that all of the Elemental Bearers would write to her when they discovered a lesson in friendship. They had quite a few crazy adventures of all kinds since that day Twilight came, from designed dresses for the Grand Galloping Gala to defeating an all powerful beast named Discord from destroying Equestria through pure chaos.

Little did Twilight know that her biggest adventure was about to begin, one that would change her and possibly all of Equestria for all time.

Dragon Watching Trench:

Right now she and her friends were currently hiding out in a rectangular trench that Pinkie Pie and Applejack, two more of Twilight's friends, had dung out while she and Rainbow Dash were busy with Fluttershy, all of the present ponies now dressed in army-styled camouflage and scanning the skies with binoculars.

"I don't see any dragons." Twilight commented in a hushed tone after observing the sky for a moment.

"Me neither." Applejack added, looking with her binoculars as well in the same tone.

"Me neither neither." Pinkie included, looking up with her binoculars as well...but in the opposite side. "Shoot!"

Applejack was an Earth Pony. Her fur was a sharp orange in color, and her mane was a sandy-blonde, growing in a messy style in the front, while growing back down her neck where it was tied off in a long ponytail at the end, her long tail styled and tied off in the same manner. Adorning her head resting a traditional brown, slightly-battered, stetson cowboy hat. Her eyes were a lime green in color, and her cutie mark was the picture of three red apples.

Pinkie Pie was an Earth Pony as well. Her fur, however, was a really bright pink in color, and her wild, curly, darker-pink mane could only be described as a combination of cotton candy and a coiffure's worst nightmare, her tail styled in the same manner. Her eyes were a very bright baby-blue in color and her cutie mark was a picture of three blue party balloons.

"You don't think we missed them, do you?" Rainbow Dash asked, causing Pinkie to look at her through the wrong side of the binoculars.

"No, I don't think so." Twilight stated, speaking in a soft whisper should the dragons arrive any moment now. "We're just a little early, and I'm glad we are. This way we can watch every moment of the migration without bringing any unwanted attention to ourselves!"

As if fate decided to mess with the unicorn's claim, the last of Twilight's friends arrived. "*Yoo-hoo*!" Rarity's voice announce from a distance in an overly exaggerated and dramatic tone. "Well?" She asked as she rolled over the end of the red carpet she was walking on, which then led to a bursting of confetti around the other girls. "What do you think? Am I the toast of the trench or what?"

Rarity was a unicorn as well. Her fur was pure white in color, like that of diamonds, and her rich, combed, and luster-styled mane and tail were a deep, rich purple in color. Her lady-like eyes were a deep sapphire blue in color, and her cutie mark was a picture of three blue jewels. She was currently dressed up in what supposed to be a camouflage dress, but it's bright purple style and golden laces didn't just cut the bill for 'blending in'.

"Ya'll be toast alright..." Applejack stated flatly in a hushed tone. "...when the dragons see ya parading around in *that* getup."

"You look very nice, Rarity." Twilight commented, trying to keep a straight face and a calm voice as she used her magic to form a bubble around the confetti and red carpet, causing them to disappear as Rarity joined them in the trench. "But could you maybe look nice down here in the trench with us?"

"Nice is an understatement. I look *fabulous*! Who says camouflage has to be drab?" Rarity said in a posh, sophisticated tone, apparently ignoring the looks her friends were sending her.

"Ahoy, maties! Dragons ho!" Pinkie Pie announced, causing them to look back and up towards the sky.

Dragons, *thousands* of them, filled the skies above as they flew past the ponies in the trench. They came in all sorts of sizes and different colors as well, being mostly red, blue, yellow, or green, though there also was the occasional grey, brown, and black. They all flew through the skies about two hundred feet above the girls' heads, all heading in one direction toward the mountains beyond Canterlot in one large straight line. It was an impressive, but at the same time, intimidating sight.

"Oooh... Ahhhh!" The girls all awed, using their binoculars to watch the mighty reptilians fly overhead.

One teenage dragon, a green one with golden, thorn-like horns and a long leaf-shaped tail, noticed the trench below; he then swooped down and performed a summersault in front of the trench before flying back up to the flock, as if showing off for the girls.

"Wow, amazing!" Twilight commented, she and her friends lowering their binoculars.

Rainbow Dash, however, wasn't very impressed and blew her tongue. "Pretty lame move. Is that all they've got?" She asked sulkishly.

One blue fish-like dragon bumped onto a fiery red-and-gold one, whether on accident or purpose; the red one did not like that one bit and fired out a huge wave of fire from his mouth, aiming for the dragon but hitting the trench instead. The girls all quickly ducked to avoid the flames...minus Rainbow Dash, who received the full force of the dragon's fiery breath.

"What do ya think of *that* 'move', Rainbow Dash? Still think they're lame?" Applejack asked with a smirk on her face.

Rainbow Dash, on the other hoof, contained an almost shocked expression on her face, which was a bit charred, along with her mane. "Uh, not so much. The word 'fierce' comes to mind." She admitted.

"And 'formidable'." Rarity added with some admiration in her tone.

"And 'super-duper scary'!" Pinkie included, lying on the ground in fear, but was immediately cheered up when Spike came along and brought a cupcake to her hooves.

Spike was Twilight's baby dragon assistant, whom she had hatched from an egg just before becoming Celestia's prized student; he was only half the height of a pony, and a soft lavender in color with no wings, a pale-green underbelly, and sharp-green stegosaurus-like plates on his head, back, and tail, the largest plates being the one's on his head. His over-all appearance was still chubby and babyish, despite being matured to a preteen mental age.

"Yeah. Us dragons are definitely a force to be reckoned with." He said with pride took out a cookie from the bowl of sweets he made and handed it over to Applejack. His sense of pride, however, was shattered when Rainbow Dash collapsed onto the ground on her back, laughing her head off at the sight of him.

"Yeah, right, Spike." She managed to squeak out. "That's one of the *scariest* aprons I've ever seen!" She said 'scariest' with obvious sarcasm before bursting into laughter again, with Applejack and Pinkie Pie joining her.

"What's wrong with wearing an apron?" Spike asked, looking at his pink apron with furry trims that presented a hot pink heart in the middle. "*You* won't be laughing when *you* spill blueberries all over *your* scales. Urh...Feathers. That's one tough stain!"

Rainbow Dash paused to breathe, a tear running down her face. "One *tough* stain against one *lame* dragon." She continued to laugh, much to Spike's annoyance.

"You leave him alone, Rainbow Dash!" Rarity scolded, causing Rainbow to stop laughing. "Spike's style is unique. He doesn't have to look like other dragons."

"Or act like them." Twilight offered.

"My little Spikey Wikey is perfect the way he is." Rarity complimented, fondly flicking his top scale with her hoof.

This comment seemed to worry Spike. "I don't...act like other dragons?" He asked.

"Oh, not even close!" Pinkie answered cheerfully.

"But why would ya want to, Spike?" Applejack asked.

"Yes. You've got something those dreadfully fierce dragons can only dream of." Rarity stated.

"What's that?" Spike asked in a hopeful manner. The answer, however, was something he didn't have in mind:

"The cutest widdle chubby cheeks!" Rarity fawned in a babyish voice while pressing her hooves on his face and squishing them. "Ooooo!"

"Cute? Dragons aren't supposed to be cute!" Spike stammered while blushing very heavily. "R-Right?"

But that just made it worse for the poor baby dragon. "Oh, sweetie, you are turning the most delightful shade of red, it is most becoming." Rarity said with a hint of a fond giggle.

Spike then he notice every one of the girls staring at him in acceptance, but that just made it worse; dragons are supposed to be scary, tough, strong! Not cute and chubby! "Rrrgh!" He growled in frustration, jumping out from the trench and storming off.

"Oh, isn't he adorable when he waddles off in anger?" Rarity expressed.

"*Waddle*? Rrrrrggggh!" He released before leaving the area angrily.

"Wow..." Twilight muttered, watching her number one assistant storming off. "And I thought he loved getting attention..."

"I don't see what's to get so upset about." Rarity responded. "He's so adorable! What's the harm in that?"

Twilight, however, just frowned in thought, wondering what could be bothering her number one assistant.

Twilight's House/Ponyville Library, midnight:

The rest of the day was spent watching the dragons on their migration, and then Twilight and her friends ended it by going out for pizza. After enjoying a long, exciting day ending with a delicious meal with your friends will leave any creature, human, pony, dragon, or otherwise feeling very satisfied and eager for sleep...but tonight, Twilight wasn't going to find it.

Spike hadn't enjoyed the day so much as Twilight and her pony friends; what they had said about him not being a dragon had left him greatly disturbed. It was true though; when dragons eggs are found and hatched by ponies, which is not uncommon, they use a spell to erase the strong, primal instincts of a dragon and replace them with the gentle instincts of a pony. Spike didn't even know how to act like a dragon even if he wanted too.

"What am I?" He asked himself as he laid in his basket-bed next to Twilight's bed, staring at the ceiling in thought. "Where am I from? Who am I suppose to be?"

Twilight, who had been trying to drown out the dragon's questions with one of her pillows, groaned in aggravation. "I don't know!" She nearly shouted for what seemed like the hundredth's time. "For the last time, Spike, you were given to me as an egg." Her voice softened in pity as she spoke. "I don't know who found you or where they found you."

"Seriously? That's *all* you know?" Spike asked, turning away from her in disappointment.

"I'm sorry, Spike." Twilight said as honestly as she could.

"That doesn't tell me anything about who I am!" Spike stated as he sat up and climbed out of bed; he made his way to the bedroom mirror, looking as his reflection in sadness. "I need answers! I feel like I'm...I'm looking at a complete stranger."

He then broke down and curled up on the floor, stricken with grief. Twilight's heart tightened in her own sadness and pity; she knew that she didn't know what he was feeling, but she knew that she needed to help. "Oh, Spike..." She said softly, getting out of bed and coming up to him. "Why don't we do some late-night research? See what we can find out." She offered.

Spike looked up, a small glimmer of hope passing over his face. "Really? You'd do that?" He asked hopefully.

"Of course." Twilight said as she used her magic to turn on the light and levitate the first book of Mythical Creatures in front of her. "I'm sure we can find something." She then opened the book with her magic and begun to read.

Nine Hour's Later, Morning:

"Nothing..." A now exhausted Twilight muttered, her hair a mess as she sat amongst enormous piles of books, still going through them one by one with no success whatsoever. "...Nothing in this one either..."

"Nothing *at all* about dragons?!" Spike asked, throwing his own book to the side in frustration. "This is getting ridiculous!"

"I know." Twilight stated as continued going through the books. "It's hard to believe but ponies know next to nothing about dragons. Apparently they're too rare and too scary to try to talk too or study." She then closed the book and put it way; she turned to see Spike looking as if he was about to cry.

"I-I-I wonder if D-Dragons cry..." Spike sobbed, already bursting into tears.

"Aw, Spike..." Twilight began, using her magic to levitate a handkerchief to the baby dragon. But Spikes choked down his sorrow, wiping his tears away as he pushed the handkerchief away from himself.

"It's okay, Twilight." He announced with determination. "I'm gonna who I am if it's the last thing I do!"

Suddenly the front door opened with a loud crash, revealing Rarity and Rainbow Dash on the side, both ponies giving their greetings. Their sudden greetings startled Spike, causing him to jump in suprise and fall into the large pile of books near Twilight.

"*Good Morning!*" Rarity spoke in a lively tone.

"Ya wanna join us for breakfast?" Rainbow Dash asked.

"That sounds great. I'm famished." Twilight answered.

"Count me out. I've gotta get an early start!" Spike replied, jumping out from the pile of books.

The three mares looked confused. "An early start?" Rarity inquired, her eyes revealing that she was growing concerned.

Spike turned to face them, standing in front of the door. "Yes! I'm going on a quest of self-discovery! I need to learn what it means to be a dragon!" He announced proudly. "And the only way I'm gonna do that is to join the dragon migration!"

The girls were *not* expecting *that*. "*What*?" They all exclaimed in alarm.

"Spike, that's nonsense talk!" Rainbow Dash tried to talk some sense into Spike, who was gathering supplies from the fridge. "I know that you're a dragon, but *those* dragons mean business!" When she said that, he turned around with a serious face, but ironically he had a picnic blanket, a sandwich, and that same apron he wore yesterday in his claw. "They're big, and tough, and scary..."

"And I'm small, and meek... and I like to wear aprons." He finished, presenting the apron in front of her. "See?" He threw the apron away from him. "This is exactly why I need to spend time with them."

"All I'm saying is that you could get hurt!" Rainbow told him.

"Darling, this time I really do have to agree with Rainbow Dash." Rarity stated as brought herself into the conversation as well. "I don't want those big, ugly, nasty dragons to hurt one little scale on your cutsey-wutsey head!" She rubbed her hoof gently on his head. Nonetheless, this made him even more irritated and he slapped it away with the old-fashioned 'run-away stick-sack' he finished making.

"I'm sorry, but I've made up my mind." Spike stated, walking toward the door.

"Oh, uh, quick, do something!" Rarity directed desperately to Rainbow Dash. "Stop him before it's too late!"

Rainbow Dash quickly flew over to the sack he was carrying and grabbed it with her teeth pulling it away and preventing Spike to move any further. "Ngh! Hey! Give it back!" He shouted, engaging the cyan-colored pegasus in a tug of war.

Twilight watched the two tug of war for a while, when she decided Spike was right. With a flash of purple light, she teleported in between the struggling two. "Hold it!" She shouted, using her magic to teleport both of them at the same time. Spike reappeared at the mouth of the doorway, while Rainbow Dash reappeared back inside the library near the center desk, the dragon hatchling and pegasus exclaiming in pain as they landed on their backs. Twilight, looking uncertain but knowing it was the right thing to do, she used her magic to levitate Spike's sack and, after staring at it for a brief second, handed in back to him.

"*Really*?" Spike asked, surprised.

"Don't tell me you think he should go!" Rainbow exclaimed.

"Yes, Spike." Twilight spoke compassionately. "I couldn't answer your questions. My books couldn't either. I understand why you want to look elsewhere. I *truly believe* you need to go on this quest. And we have *no right to stop you*." She directed the last sentence towards Rarity and Rainbow Dash.

"I suppose not." Rarity finally agreed, rubbing her head with her hoof.

"I still say you're nutty, but hey, I've done *lots* of nutty things." Rainbow added.

"We know." Twilight and Rarity stated flatly in unison. Rainbow groaned under her breath.

"Well then, I guess this is goodbye, Spike." Twilight said softly, hugging him before sending him off. "We can't wait to hear about it when you return."

"Yeah, we hope your trip-" Rainbow Dash began.

"Quest." Twilight corrected.

"-your *quest* answers some of your pesky 'who am I' questions."

"Thanks, everypony. I know it will." Spike stated before turning away and walking off, ready to find what he was looking for.

"Goodbye, Spikey Wikey!" Rarity waved as he continued walking.

"Go get 'em, big guy!" Rainbow Dash included, waving as well.

"We have faith in you!" Twilight finished, also waving.

There was a moment's silence, all of them still grinning and waving.

"We're following him, right?" Rarity asked through her grin.

"Of course." Twilight answered in the same manner.

2. Dragon Quest

CHAPTER I: DRAGON QUEST

Dragon Mountain, 2 days later:

The name itself fits the place very well.

Far beyond the Everfree Forest and the mountain range cutting off Equestria's boundaries from the rest of the planet, was a great volcanic land where huge, dry mountains dotted the lifeless landscape. And amongst all the smaller mountains was an enormous extinct volcano. Here was where all the dragons from the multiple Fantasy Worlds came in their annual migration; this was a sacred place in their eyes, where young adults found mates and began new lives together, where females came to lay their eggs in safety and hatch their young, and where young dragons would pass from child to adulthood through rite of passage.

It was a truly wondrous place, a land of death where life would begin.

And it was here another young dragon was coming for the first time.

Just as Spike was making his epic quest, another dragon of a similar color was just finishing the great journey his kind made every mortal generation. This was also his first time, but he was by no means the cute, small, babyish dragon Spike was.

Standing on all fours he was eight feet tall and twenty-five feet in length. His body was like that of a mix between a cat and a dinosaur, walking upright on all fours with his long tail held out for balance. His hind-legs were like that of a therapod dinosaur, with the ankle joint and three toed feet, while his forelegs were more like human arms, with three fingered, one thumbed hands on each arm; the fingers and toes ended in long golden curved claws. His large bat wings had a wingspan almost twice as long as his nose-to-tail was, the longest fingers being the 'pointing fingers', and had fiery-orange leathery membrane. His long, serpentine, dinosaur-like tail made up half his body length, and ended in the usual, yellow arrow-tip, which was razor sharp and had two sharp spikes at each side of the base, making it even more lethal; his long serpentine neck was a third the length of his tail. His head and jaws were those of the typical dragon: dinosaur-like with flaring nostrils, webbed reptilian ears, and a short snout and jaws with sharp, knife-like teeth. He had two long, yellow, crooked horns jutting out the back of his head, and a spiky gold reptilian frill with orange webbing running through the middle of his head, beginning at his forehead ending halfway down the neck; the frill began a trail of yellow dorsal spines with orange webbing running down his back to his tail arrow. His large, snake-like eyes were a bright magenta and had silt-pupils. His entire body had smooth scaly skin that was like a snake's, except for his back, which was rough and bumpy like a crocodile's, and was a sharp royal-purple in color with darker purple markings and stripes running down his spine and a golden underbelly.

He was Spyro, the legendary purple dragon and guardian of the Dragon Realms.

Flapping his fiery wings to slow his descendent, the purple dragon touched down gracefully in the giant, volcanic crater that made up the meeting place of all the dragons of Equestria. It was at the top of an enormous mountain, or inactive volcano by the looks of it and by the pools of lava within the deep mouth.

He felt a presence land beside him, and he turned to see his long-time mentor and father figure landing next to him. Ignitus, Guardian of Fire.

Ignitus was much older and larger than the purple dragon, standing 18 feet in height on all fours and almost fifty feet in length, more than twice Spyro's size. His scales were smooth and a deep reddish-orange in color, with dark red flame markings decorating his body. He only had two horns, which were Z-shaped, facing backwards and upwards, and a flame-shaped frill ran down his head to his neck, as well as flame-shaped frills framing his head, limbs, and tail, the last ending in a fire-shaped tailblade. His underbelly and wing membrane were golden in color, and his eyes were a fiery golden in color with slit pupils.

"So this is where we gather for the great migration?" Spyro asked curiously. "Not exactly what I had in mind."

"Perhaps so, but this land is a sacred place for all dragons from both Equestria and Prehistoria." Ignitus told him. "For generations we dragons have come here to carry on in our ancestors footsteps in continuing the dragon race. It's an honor to be here."

Spyro nodded slightly, his thoughts elsewhere.

"You'll have to excuse me, young dragon, but the Guardians are required in the presence of the Dragon Lords of Equestria." The Guardian of Fire said, taking flight once more. "Good luck, young dragon."

And with that Ignitus left, leaving Spyro standing alone in the crater of Dragon Mountain.

Spyro sat there for a while in thought before he decided to at least see what dragons in Equestria were like...and what he found wasn't entirely disappointing either. The adult dragons, which were slightly bigger than Prehistorian Dragons, where exactly what he had expected: majestic, big, wise-looking. He said hello to a few of them, just a simple greeting, and while they usually looked surprised at being addressed in a friendly matter by a complete stranger they would greet him as well.

The teenagers though, which stood on their hind legs yet were still around the same height as Spyro was, left a lot to be desired.

The group Spyro had was watching at the moment all seemed to be part of a gang, which was lead by a red and orange dragon who seemed to be sneering almost ninety percent of the time. They were gathered next to several huge piles of gems and were currently having a wrestling competition. The classic one-on-one-in-the-middle-while-everyone-yells-at-y ou kind of thing. He almost joined them, as they were the only teenage dragons he could see and because he couldn't find Cynder or his other friends, but he had no intention of becoming part of a street gang.

So Spyro just laid there a distance away from the gang, lounging on a large warm rock like a big cat, watching the leader of these dragons, apparently named Garble, beat dragon after dragon. Looking closely, he could tell that the other dragons weren't trying very hard. Apparently the boss had a fearsome reputation.

As much as he enjoyed watching the gang leader assert his position as head honcho, it became boring after one or two rounds. He wished something would happen, or, more importantly, that he would find the willpower to get off his cozy rock and find some better form of entertainment.

It was times like these he could see how calm and maybe even boring his new life was when he wasn't saving the world all the time. It had been more than two years since his latest 'adventure', where he was flung far from the world of dragons to wind up a world called Starina, a world ruled by man, a race once thought to be extinct...and the world he learned to call home,

alongside the merhumans he now called family. He was very grateful for the peace he and his new loved ones brought for both Starina and Prehistoria, but he had to admit: he was itching for adventure. A chance to journey to far off lands, battle enemies, collect gems, and save worlds from evil, if not for the glory then for the thrill of battle and adventure; he'd even chase a bunch of crazy baby dragonflies across the dragon realms again just for a chance of actually doing something different, other than spending his days listening to some loud-mouthed jamaican crustacean try to talk some sense into his and his sister's heads.

He wished something different and new would happen.

Little did he know he was about to get his wish.

Just as Spyro began to get up off his rock he spotted a small dragon about fifty feet away from him...a really small dragon, no more than ten if he had to guess. This caught Spyro's attention because he hadn't seen any little kid dragons since he arrived, something he thought was weird but didn't question. So he took his chance now to examine what an baby Equestrian dragon looked like: He was just less than half as tall as a teenage dragon, also standing on his hind legs, with green and lavender scales. He had no wings and carried a classic handkerchief-tied-to-a-stick carrying bag slung over his shoulder. The kid had just climbed over the rim of the mountain and was panting for breath, his eyes surveying the rocky valley. As soon as he saw the group of teenage dragons, his face brightened and he made straight for them, sliding down the side of the short cliff.

Now what does he think he's doing?

Spyro watched him reach the bottom of the hill, walk over to the group of teenagers, and start talking to them like nobody's business. He couldn't hear what was being said, but the kid seemed to be introducing himself, while the teenagers all just stared at him.

A little kid trying to join a street gang? That made no sense whatsoever.

The teenagers must have been thinking along the same lines, except they handled it in a completely different manner. Instead of informing the kid of his mistake and telling him to back home to his own personal happy utopia known as childhood, they started making fun of him. Soon the kid found himself the center of jeers, name-calling, and pretty much anything that a five-year-old would consider soul-crushing insults.

Spyro snarled angrily, a dragon's growl erupting from his throat; if there was one thing he hated above all other things, it was bullies! Especially those who pick on younger kids! He got up and was about to head down there and give the group of knuckleheads a piece of his mind, when he noticed...'something'...watching the kid and the teenagers from a short distance away.

Twilight, Rarity and Rainbow Dash had indeed followed Spike, just as they planned...but not in the most inconspicuous manner; Rarity had made a giant costume that was supposed to be a dragon for all three of them to hide in at once. The scales were studded with gems and each

side of the dragon had holes for wings, which Rainbow Dash filled. There was a large bow wrapped around the neck, and it was clearly made to present a female dragon.

After a lot of effort, they had managed to drag themselves up the mountain top, stopping on the ledge to observe the scene below them. "I'm telling you, we'll never pass for a real dragon!" Rainbow spoke up in a hushed tone.

"Oh, pish-posh! This costume is fabulous, one of my finer creations." Rarity stated in offense, causing Twilight to shush them both.

"Shhh! We'll never pass if they hear *three* voices coming out of *one* dragon! Now come on, let's go!" Twilight snapped. Rainbow Dash took a first step, but being hard as it is already, they actually slid downhill.

Spyro could only stare in utter bewilderment and maybe even horror at the...'something'...he watched come down the hill; he used the term 'something' because it was most definitely not a living dragon. It fact, as he got closer, it appeared to be a very badly made costume of a dragon. It had all of it attention focused on the group of teenagers, so it didn't notice the purple dragon sneaking up behind it.

Keeping low to the ground and slowly sneaking up on the costume like a cat would, using slow silent steps, he discovered it was right on both parts. Yes, it was a costume, and yes, it was very bad: For one, it had eight pairs of legs, four white and four cyan, which were poking out of cut holes in the 'skin' of the costume. Sewn thread was clearly visible on the eyes and the body. Plus, it had tiny wings, though these seemed to be part of the cyan creature in the front part of the body.

He sniffed the air; nothing could hide in a costume from his draconian sense of smell. What hit him was natural scent of equine flesh. At first he thought horses; natural guess...but they were too short and small to be horses, the one in front actually being two stacked on top of each other.

So...he guessed ponies; three of them. He also assumed, from the wings, that the cyan pony in the front was a pegasus.

Ponies? What the heck were these ponies?

What confused Spyro even more was how they weren't attracting any attention. Despite all the obvious evidence to the contrary, none of the other dragons seemed to notice anything different about the oddly shaped mass of fabric and thread that vaguely resembled a giant lizard with wings. Were they really that dense...or did they even care?

This was a group of ponies that wasn't supposed to be here and certainly didn't want to be discovered...maybe. They seemed intensely interested in the kid-dragon that Spyro had been about to protect, which was either a good or a not-so-good thing.

Suddenly an idea hit him; a delightfully evil one that made him grin:

He slowly sneaked up behind the ponies in a stalking manner and, rearing up to full height, lifted his head up and unleashed a powerful roar.

Twilight and the others were watching Spike when suddenly a monstrous roar erupted from behind them. She, Rarity and Rainbow Dash jumped at least five feet into the air while letting out a very loud and long scream of terror in unison, forgetting they were in a confined area. The result was a very good impersonation of a dragon doing the wave with its entire body while screaming. Which, of course, ended with a crazy heap of fabric and limbs as they hit the ground.

Spyro fell over onto his back, laughing his head off. Best. Idea. *Ever*.

It took about five minutes, a hushed argument, and lots of tripping and falling before they were able to get themselves balanced again. They then turned on him, using a very deep voice that was obviously fake and yet succeeded in disguising the gender of the speaker.

"Hey! What do you think you doing?" Twilight said in her deep, 'manly' voice, only to nearly gasp in fright at the dragon in front of them, who was just getting back up off the floor.

He was *monstrous*! Standing on all four legs he was taller than they were in the costume and as the other teenagers that were standing on two legs were, and about *twice* the other teen's body mass...and by none means fat or chunky. His body was long, sleek, and deadly, but also muscled powerfully in all the right places to give him a strong appearance; a deadly combination of speed, strength, and agility. His body wasn't smooth, plain, and 'cartoonish' like the other dragons, but dark and sinister, every last sharp scale, tail blade, horn, claw, and tooth fined out in every last detail. His face, while gentle looking at the moment, was also fierce and intimidating, as dragons should be; when angry, this dragon could be *terrifying*! And his eyes! Those fiery reptilian eyes! They bore into her own as if staring into her very soul...and were locked onto her own eyes instead of the costume's, which was a very bad sign.

Spyro took this opportunity to take a look at the head: It's mouth had been left open, leaving a viewing port, and he could make out a shape inside. Again, he couldn't pinpoint the gender, but he could tell that one, it *was* a pony, and two, it had a horn on its forehead. A Unicorn.

"Just messing with you." Spyro assured her, wiping a tear from his eye. "Nothing to freak out about."

Twilight blinked in surprise by the dragon's calm, causal tone; she was expecting something more ferocious. "Why-" She began in her normal voice, but quickly caught herself. "I-uh...*Ahem!*...I mean, why would you do that?" She asked.

"I'm a dragon; it's what we do." He stated as if it was basic knowledge.

"Well stop it! Or I'll...uh...I'll roast you alive!" Twilight snapped, slightly aggravated by the dragon's attitude.

Spyro grinned, revealing his dagger-like teeth.

"You might want to get out of that costume first. You can barely stand as it is."

Twilight paled in horror, feeling the blood drain from her limbs and face; did he say costume? She heard an anxious Rainbow Dash growl 'I told you it wasn't going to work' at a close-to-fainting Rarity. This dragon was onto them! No, wait...calm down. Maybe she can convince him otherwise. "C-costume? I d-don't know what you're t-talking about." She stammered with her manly voice, thought her mind was about to snap under pressure.

Spyro mentally smiled.

Bullseye.

"Oh really, then perhaps you would know it isn't wise to lie to the legendary purple dragon from Prehistoria." Spyro said, slowly stalking around them in an intimidating manner; even he couldn't resist the chance to scare people with his dragonish nature once every now and then. "Any other dragon would've known that, even you dragons from this Equestria land we're in now. You're sure you're to really a bunch of ponies in a dragon costume?"

Twilight bit back a gasp. No wonder this dragon was so monstrous looking! It was a *Prehistorian* breed! The legends of Prehistoria had pretty much become virtually unknown to ponykind over the eons, but being Princess Celestia's prized student had granted Twilight access to these long forgotten tales: tales of a dark land filled with hellish monsters and dragons that put the dragons of this world to shame. It is said in these stories that this world was where all of Equestria's dragons first migrated from, having been simplified by this world's magic over the generations. She has never expected to encounter a monster from that world, especially a dragon.

She began dreading that she and her friends may not make it out of this adventure alive.

"T-two of my what? I don't know what you mean..." She began as one final, desperate attempt of denial, when an annoyed Spyro interrupted them.

"Oh, come on, *unicorn*! I'm not *stupid*! I can tell that you're not a dragon!" The dragon spat, his voice bordering an animal's growl, cutting Twilight's sentence with her frightened gasp. "Because one: I can see the stitches and buttons all over this outfit of yours! Two: Since when do dragons have eight legs, especially legs each ending in a *hoof*? Three: I could smell pony flesh from when I first spotted you. And Four:..."

He lifted himself slightly on his hind legs, becoming level with her own gaze, looking straight into her eyes.

"...I can see you in there." He growled dangerously.

Twilight stuttered desperately for a few seconds, trying as hard as she could to come up with a response...but she realized it was hopeless; this dragon wasn't fooled. He had just pointed out that he could see her in the mouth of the costume, and if that wasn't enough he had three other reasons to prove her wrong. When she spoke next, she used her real voice. "Okay, dragon. You've caught us. But I feel it necessary t-to warn you that I am the p-prized student of Princess Celestia. If any h-harm were to befall me or my friends, the princess w-will be notified and I d-doubt she will be very happy." The purple unicorn warned him, trying to sound calm and confident and utterly failing at it, fear gripping the edges of her voice.

Spyro paused in surprise at the voice that was unmistakably female, wondering why on earth was a female of all sexes would be out here. But now that she was willing to confess his aggression faded. He gave a soft, reassuring smile to the unicorn, his gaze softening as he lowered himself back down to his normal height.

"I don't really think that this princess of yours would be much of a threat to a dragon like myself, but you don't have to worry." He told her in a calm, comforting voice. "I don't have any intention of hurting any of you. I was merely curious about this costume and to why you ponies would be coming into such dangerous territory. You don't have to be scared of me; I not going to hurt you."

Twilight was surprised when she saw the dragon's gaze shift into a friendly look; she wasn't expecting a dragon other than Spike to ever be friendly with ponies, especially one of the Prehistorian monsters. She felt strangely comfortable and safe when she looked into his eyes; calm and gentle, showing her she had no reason to fear...but before she could respond Rainbow Dash had to open her big mouth.

"Hey bub! If you know what's good for you, back off! I ain't afraid to get tough with a dragon!" She snapped angrily; not only was she offended by the way he called Princess Celestia 'not much of a threat', but she also didn't like being referred to as being scared.

Spyro glanced downward and saw, very much to his surprise, a pair of magenta eyes glaring back up at him. "Wait, are those...?" He began, before he looked back at Twilight with an dumbfounded look.

"*Please* tell me those aren't eye holes." He deadpanned.

"Well, yeah..." Twilight admitted sheepishly, a lot more comfortable now that death wasn't glaring her down. "She was kind of adamant about being able to see where she was going..."

"And you actually thought this would work!" Spyro exclaimed, slapping his forehead. "I can't even began to understand the reasoning behind that!"

"To be fair, it was working pretty well until you came along." Twilight pointed out with a slightly exaggerated tone.

"Yeah, and that has me rather worried. Are Dragons of this world usually this unobservant?" The purple dragon asked, glancing about at the other dragons lounging about.

"I wouldn't know. This is...well...our first visit." Twilight stated. "Why, is this your first visit as well?"

"You could say that. Which brings me to my first question: why are you guys even here?" Spyro then asked, sitting back like a dog would. "You don't seem like the type to just wander into dragon territory. Except maybe your blue friend with the eye-holes." He then stated, motioning to Rainbow Dash with a claw.

"I CAN hear you, y'know!" Rainbow shouted. Twilight promptly stomped a hoof on her to get her to shut up.

"Clearly." Spyro muttered. "So what is it? Business? Pleasure? Tactical insertion?" He asked the last one with a smirk.

Twilight thought about it for a moment. "I don't know what that last one is, but we are here to...help a friend, let just say."

"A friend? You mean the kid over there?" Spyro asked, pointing to the little dragon he had been distracted from, who had managed to convince the teenagers to at least give him a chance and was now engaged in a belching contest. Which basically consisted of each dragon blowing huge fireballs into the air. Hmm, he doesn't know when to quit does he? Spyro was gonna have to do something about that soon.

"Yes." Twilight replied. "How did you know?"

"You guys aren't exactly subtle when you spy on someone." Spyro stated flatly, a smirk adorning his snout.

"Oh..."

"What kind of 'help' are we talking about here?" He then asked.

"We're keeping on eye on him, making sure things don't get out of hand." Twilight stated.

The purple dragon resisted the urge to guffaw. "And *what* do you ponies think you're gonna do *should* things 'get out of hand'? Do I have to remind you yet again where you are?" He asked.

Rainbow Dash decided to speak up again. "We know our plan, and it ain't any of YOUR business! So I'm telling you again, *BACK OFF!* Unless you think you can take on the fastest mare in Equestria!"

"Rainbow!" Twilight snapped, bonking her yet again in the head.

Spyro shrugged. "So your just gonna wing it? Okay, I can respect that. Out of curiosity though, why this kid?"

"What?" Twilight asked in confusion.

"Why would you go to the trouble to protect one who isn't even the same species as you? And why do you refer to him as a 'friend'?"

The lavender unicorn softened. "Because he is also not from here, and because he is."

Spyro gave it a moment's thought, then simply nodded. "...I don't pretend to completely understand that, but it satisfies my curiosity anyway. Now, one last question before I depart to my earlier business: Where did you get that costume? To be quite frank...it *suck*s."

Rairty, who had remained quiet during the entire conversation, did *not* approve of this comment and stated her personal thoughts. "How dare you, you monstrous brute! I'll have you know that this costume is entirely hoofmade, and could pass for a real dragon any day! It certainly looks better than your ugly mug!"

Spyro held a claw to his golden chest as if pained. "Ouch. That hurts." He said in mocking sadness.

"GOOD!" Rarity screamed.

"Well, if your finished insulting my looks, I must be off." Spyro stated, getting up and turning away from them. "I have a fellow dragon to help out."

"Wait, what are you...?" Twilight began, but Spyro didn't hear the rest of what she said, as he was by then halfway to the group of teenagers.

They must not have taken that long talking, because the teens were still doing their belching contest as Spyro approached them, blowing fireball after fireball into the air. A big fat brown dragon, which reminded Spyro slightly of Bash, had just placed the record, blowing a huge torrent of flame that engulfed Spyro and the entire group of onlookers. When the flame ceased, the dragons were left without as much as a burn.

Spyro snorted: A fire pokemon's flames were hotter than that.

"Think you can beat that, peewee?" Garble growled at the kid.

Spike gulped audibly, and stood in front of the group. He looked like he was going to throw up for a few seconds, but then he burped and let out a tiny green fireball, which twisted and formed into a sealed scroll before floating to the ground.

Spyro cocked an eyebrow; what kind of breath power was that?

Garble immediately snatched up the letter and opened it, reading it aloud. "*From the desk of Princess Celestia. Dear Spike, please te-* Ha! Get this, guys! Spike's pen pals with the Namby Pamby Pony Princess!" He told the others. This was followed by torrents of laughter.

Garble was a strong looking dragon, standing just a tall as Spyro on two legs. He had fiery-red scales and a pale-gold underbelly, with a orange fin on his head resembling a punk-styled haircut; the fin started a trail of orange spikes running down his spine and tail, ending with the causal arrowhead tailblade, also orange. His teeth were extra long and sharp, and his yellow eyes always seemed to be glaring at everything.

Spyro groaned; was *that* seriously the best he could come up with? This had gone far enough, and the purple dragon wasn't going to stand by while these boneheads demoted the poor kid any further.

"*'Namby pamby pony princess'*? If you're going to insult someone, at least make them good insults!" Spyro snarled darkly, stepping forward in a battle stance, wings spread for battle.

The red dragon spun around, and his glaring eyes fell on the purple dragon standing before them. "Hey! Watch it pal! Don't you know who you're talking to?" He asked harshly.

"The guardian of wind for all I know." Spyro snarled, folding his wings back against his body. "I think a dragon like yourself would have better things to do than pick on children half his age."

"Ah, a new guy huh?" He asked, his aggressive tone softening just the tiniest bit. "Well I guess I can let you off the hook this time, Prehistoric Boy. But here's some advice: I'm head honcho around here. Whatever I say goes, goes, got it?"

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "And if I don't feel like it?"

He grinned. "Than you become our new punching bag."

"So...it's like that now, is it?"

"Yeah, pretty much. So, what do ya say?" He asked.

Spyro glared at him for what felt like an eternity...then merely shrugged. "Suit yourselves; your business is your business, but I'll take on this flame breath challenge of yours...for *his* sake." He told them, motioning a claw to Spike.

Spike looked both surprised and awed by this new dragon, but Garble simply smirked. "Go right ahead; so us all what you've got." He said, mock-bowing the way. Spyro merely snorted as he took his position with the other dragons, standing next to the fat brown dragon who had recently won. flexing his joints before planting all four of his feet firmly against the earth, he inhaled slowly and deeply, charging up his own fire breath...the back of his throat began to glow as whisps of flame formed in the air around his mouth, being sucked into his mouth in a swirling motion...

VOOM!

An *enormous* stream of fire erupted from his jaws, dwarfing even the brown dragon's blast; it soared through the air and struck the side of the mountain; the very rock of the mountain was blasted away in an explosion of fire and rock, leaving a hole large enough for a teen dragon to walk through, the sides of the rock red hot and melting into lava.

The other dragons were stunned, but then they snapped out of it and began that street-gang-styled cheering again. Spyro snorted coyly, blowing away the excess smoke rising from his mouth and nostrils.

"Not bad, Prehistoria Boy." Garble stated, looking slightly impressed. "I guess you Prehistoric types really are tough enough to match us."

"And what the hell is that suppose to mean! I could beat you all with my wings tied behind my back!"

Spyro groaned as he and the other dragons looked up to see more Prehistorian Dragon teenagers, six other males and three females in total, flying down and landing near Spyro. They all had the same body structure as Spyro, as well as the dark, deadly appearances of true Prehistorian Dragons.

The one that had spoken was the dragon at the front of the group, and he looked pissed. This dragon was the same age and size as Spyro, bearing a slight resemblance to the purple dragon. His scales where as red as freshly spilled blood, and his wing membrane, underbelly, two Z-shaped horns, fire-shaped head frill, and arrowhead tailblade where as gold as the setting sun. His slit pupiled eyes were a fiery orange in color, and were currently burning with anger and indignity.

Standing next to him was a slight smaller pretty dragoness with pale-pink scales, almost like the rosy sky of a sunset. Her breast-scales and underbelly were a pale violet in color, as was the membranes of her wings. The tail arrow was shaped like an upside down heart and there was a golden necklace around her neck adorned with a glimmering ruby heart. The crest of her head was also pale violet, her bang-like horns were golden in color, and her eyes were vibrant sky blue, with round pupils.

Another dragoness landed in front of those two, being the same size as the first dragoness, but almost twice as beautiful. Her scales, however, were a dark shade of black, like the darkness of night. Her underbelly, breast-scales and wing membrane were a deep, ruby-red in color. Her tail arrow was shaped like a deadly sickle, her tail being slightly longer than Spyro's, as were the claws on her wings. She had three sets of horns, also sliver in color two large, blade-like ones curving slightly upward with four smaller ones lining her head underneath the larger ones. Her eyes were a deep emerald green, and her pupils were silted like Spyro's. Around her neck, where once a sliver choker was locked around, hung a golden seashell necklace with the letters 'C-Y-N-D-E-R' carved into it.

The red dragon was Flame, Spyro's best friend and rival. The pink dragoness was Ember, Spyro's friend and Flame's girlfriend. And the black dragoness was Cynder, once the deadly Terror of the Skies...but now Spyro's sister and potential mate.

"So there you are." Cynder stated, gently and fondly nudging her brother's head with her snout. "We've been looking everywhere for you."

"What are you guys up too this time?" Ember asked curiously.

"Hey guys." Spyro began. "We're..."

"We're busy trying to prove who's the better dragons!" Garble suddenly snapped at Ember. "So buzz off while we finish this!"

"Don't talk to her like that!" Flame snarled angrily.

"Oh yeah? What'cha do about it, hothead?" Garble challenged with a cruel smirk.

Flame, however, snarled right back and faced Garble angrily, the two glaring at each other eye to eye. "Shove your tail up your ass, that's what!" The fire dragon spat back.

A distance away from the group, Rainbow gasped in surprise and anger. "That's the dragon that torched me the other day!" She exclaimed angrily, glaring at Flame.

"Don't even think about it!" Rarity told her, pinning down her tail before she could take off out of the costume and tackle the red dragon. "You're not going to start a fight with dragons, that's for sure!"

"What is it with you males?" Whirlwind, a sliver wind dragoness, asked while rolling her eyes in annoyance. "Always having to prove who's best and fight all the time."

"Like you should talk!" Camo, the green plant dragon and Whirlwind's cousin, stated flatly in a laughing manner.

Whirlwind was a beautiful dragoness had sky-blue scales, with a light-sliver underbelly and wing feathers; like a pegasus or a griffin, she had feathery bird wings. Her tail ended with long dark-blue feathers instead of an arrowtip, and a mane of feathers starting at her head and running down her spine all the way to her tailtip. She had two long pointy ears growing back from her head, and a long, singe horn growing from her forehead like a unicorn's. Her horns and claws were sliver, and her eyes were sky-blue in color.

Camo had brilliant grass-green scales, with sharp, spiky leaves covering his back and tail, with a golden underbelly and wing membrane, and red lower legs; his legs were colored red from the elbows/knees down. His extra-long tail ended in a huge fern-like leaf, and yellow thorns decorated his body. He had three rows of horns on his head, with the smaller three of the rows in the front, the largest in the middle near the back of the head, and the middle running down his

head to his neck. His horns and extra-long claws were yellow, and his eyes were blood red, and they twinkled with mischief.

"Hey, I was just trying to help him." Spyro stated as he motioned to Spike, who had been watching the other dragons in surprised silence. "These guys were picking on him and I came to help him out."

"Are we gonna finish this or what?" Garble asked in a bored tone, arms folded.

Zap, a blue water-dragon, suddenly got an idea. "I know! Let's make this all a contest: us Prehistorian Dragons VS you Equestrian Dragons. Whichever team wins will be the ultimate dragons!" He told the others.

Zap had bright blue scales, a few shades darker than the deep blue sea. His wings and underbelly were sea-green in color, and he had a set of long silver horns that curled back and upwards like a bull's horns. His long tail ended in a large, webbed fin like that of an eel's, and his long fingers and toes were webbed like a frog's. A large fin-frill grew backwards from his head, and started a long trail of webbed spikes running down his back, ending as it merged with his tail fin. Around his chest and shoulders he wore what resembled a diver's breathing gear, a pair of tanks strapped to his back between his wings. His eyes were a bright orange in color.

Everyone agreed on this, the two races of dragon taking sides, and most of the adult dragons lounging about nearby all lifted their heads up to watch this.

"Elemental Breath Contest!" Garble exclaimed. "Go!"

This match was set up simple and easy: whoever blew the biggest, coolest, and most impressive breath power, their team won. The Equestrian dragons went first, basically repeating what they did with their previous belching contest, which Ember and Whirlwind stated was 'so immature'. Since Spyro had always blew his fire before, he was told to sit this one out: Flame and the others complained that they were just being scared that Spyro had already proven himself stronger than all of them, but Spyro decided to sit this one out anyway...mostly so he could finally speak to Spike.

He made his way over to Spike, who managed to drag his eyes away from the contest and looked up to Spyro with a sense of respect, though he was still quite nervous.

"Hi there." Spyro said as he stopped and laid down next to Spike, looking down at him with a soft look. "What's your name?"

"S-Spike." Spike managed to stutter. He glanced over at the hole Spyro had left in the wall. "H-how did you do that?"

"The power of the purple dragon like myself is not one to be taken lightly." Spyro simply stated calmly. "Are you new here? I don't think I've seen you before."

"Y-yeah. I actually just got here today." Spike admitted.

"I was wondering why you were carrying a traveler's bag." Spyro stated, glancing sideways toward said bag. "Just what were you trying to accomplish by talking to these guys?" He then asked, gestured to the group, most of whom were still blowing different colored fire.

Spike blushed. "I-I was trying to find out what it means to be a dragon."

"From *these* guys?" They heard Cynder say as she sat down on the other side of Spike. "That's gotta be the craziest thing I've heard in my life." She stated like an older teen sister would when scolding her much younger brother. "Of all the dragons in this valley, why did you have to pick a group of bullies?"

"They were the youngest ones I could find, besides you guys!" Spike said defensively. "All the other ones were too big and scary!"

Spyro and Cynder glanced over at the nearest adult dragon, one with black scales and a grey underbelly. He was much taller than Spyro, had huge wings, large teeth, and was entertaining himself by melting down rocks with his fire breath. It took him about ten seconds per rock. "Okay, I can see that. Why though?" Ember asked.

"Why what?"

"Why would you be trying to find out what it means to be a dragon when you already are one?" Spyro asked, cocking his head in confusion.

"Well...I recently found out I'm not like most dragons." Spike admitted.

"How so?"

"I'm not fierce enough! All my friends call me cute and adorable! Dragons aren't cute or adorable! Dragons are fierce, dragons are powerful, dragons are cool, dragons are majestic. Like...like..." He paused, looking up at Spyro as if he was a glorious super hero or something. "Well...like you actually."

Spyro couldn't stop the smile coming to his snout; he, like all dragons, did love flattery, despite having a stronger control over his pride, and it wasn't often someone just referred to him as himself being impressive instead of just complimenting his power as the purple dragon. Cynder smiled, rolling her eyes playfully at the proud look on Spyro's face.

"You know, not very many dragons have given me such compliments." He stated.

"But you're fierce! You're tough! You're powerful! You're cool!" Spike exclaimed. "You've got a cool set of Wings! Great Claws! Cool Horns and Scales! And Totally! Awesome! Fire! I...I don't have any of those." He murmured, head hung in shame.

Spyro cocked a half-smile. "Well, you have to be pretty tough already to have the guts to come here all by yourself from Ancestors knows where." He stated, lowering his head to meet the baby dragon's gaze. "And about the fierce and powerful thing, you're still just a hatchling. No one expects those qualities from someone your age. I would understand if you were my age and still eating gems, but you're not. You're just a child. And one of the advantages of being a kid is that you don't have to worry about stuff like that."

Spike brightened. "You think so?"

Cynder nodded. "Of course we do." She said. "Besides, why would you want to be big and fierce? You're the cutest widdle dragon I've ever seen." She cooed sweetly, gently flicking the top scale on Spike's head. Spike just blushed in embarrassment again.

Spike then noticed the pendant hanging from Cynder's neck. "What's that necklace you're wearing?" He asked, anxious to change the subject from his cuteness.

Cynder giggled at his anxiousness for a change in subject, but answered anyway. "It was a gift from my grandfather." The black dragoness explained. "You see, he lives in a far-off place from our home, and this necklace is the only connection I have from his kingdom to ours. It's my most precious belonging."

"Meaning she'll rip off the head of any other dragon who tries to steal and hoard it." Spyro warned with a grin. Spike just swallowed nervously. "Hey, Spike..." The purple dragon then asked. "The friends you speak off wouldn't happen to be ponies, would they?" He asked, eyeing the costume standing near the teenagers.

Spike perked up. "Yeah! Most of the other dragons make fun of me for being friends with ponies, but I'm still glad to have them as my friends."

"What are they like?" Spyro then asked. Cynder looked at Spyro oddly, wondering what he was going on about.

The baby dragon didn't seem to notice this, and gladly rambled on about his pony friends. "Well, let's see. There's Twilight Sparkle; she's a unicorn. She's the one who hatched me out of my egg with her magic, which she's really good act. She also likes to study...a lot. A real egg-headed bookworm if you ask me, but she's also the prized student of Princess Celestia. There's also another unicorn named Rarity..." He zoned out suddenly with a love-sick look. "...the most beautiful creature in the world..." He quickly caught himself, blushing ruby-red under the smug, knowing smirks Spyro and Cynder were giving him. "...S-S-She also works as a very lady-like fashion designer, making outfits and costumes. There's also Applejack, an earth pony Cowgirl that works in an apple orchard with her family; she's nice, hard-working, and honest. Rainbow Dash, a pegasus with a rainbow-colored mane; she's really brave and maybe a bit of a

hothead, but she's *really* fast and very loyal. Also, there's Fluttershy, a pegasus who lives on the ground; she's very shy, but also very nice. And finally there's Pinkie Pie, another earth pony. She's really, *really* weird, but she throws great parties! And that's about all of them, except for you guys now."

Spyro nodded with a smile. "Thanks Spike. That's very helpful." He told him, once again turning his studying gaze to the costume.

"Yo, Prehistorians!" Garble shouted. "You're up!"

"Stay here." Cynder told Spike and Spyro. "And watch how *real* dragons blow fire."

Ember was the first to blow her fire breath, but she didn't accomplish much: it was the same strength of the purple blonde dragon's breath power. It was known that Ember wasn't much of a fighter, fire or melee wise, but she didn't really care, as long as she was good enough to get by in one piece.

Flame was next: his breath was far more powerful, almost as powerful as Spyro's. It blew across the field, engulfing the group of dragons watching, along with the costume of a dragon standing next to them; Twilight had to duck down into the neck of the costume to avoid getting turned to ash. At least Rarity was smart enough to make this out of fire-proof material.

Cynder came after: Being the once evil and dark dragon she was, her breath was that of Shadow Fire, a flame-like shadow power that burned like fire yet was as cold as ice. It was almost as large as Flame's breath, blazing through the air like a demonic cloud of darkness, both burning the costume and chilling the ponies inside.

Whirlwind was next, confidently leaping up into position: she unleashed a powerful gust of concentrated wind that blew throughout the crater, nearly knocking a few of the weaker dragons off their feet...including Camo. The costume almost blew off the ponies underneath it, but Rainbow Dash managed to pin it down by the front with her hooves before that happened.

"And that's how you do it!" She said coyly as she paraded off to the others, basking in their glares.

Zap was next: despite being a water dragon, he shot forth a beam of electricity forward, the lightning strands bouncing from the main beam and striking the ground around the watching dragons. Twilight, Rainbow Dash, and Rarity all cried out in muffled alarm as their costume and they themselves absorbed the electric static, causing the costume to cave in and constrict them.

Camo went after Zap, firing his impressive beam of pure solar energy that nearly blinded and fried the ponies in the costume. Then the earth-dragon Bash went afterwards, unleashing a green blast of tectonic earth energy as powerful as the fat-brown dragon's fire blast, blasting the costume and ponies inside several yards back. Drobot followed next, firing a single, solid laser beam from his mouth, nearly decapitating the costume and Twilight with it.

Bash was a huge wingless dragon that looked like a crossbreed between a Crocodile and a T-Rex, just a little taller than Spyro but much bigger in mass than the other dragons. His entire being was solid, firm, and seemingly made of rock, his massive, reptilian body and thick pillar-like legs built looking as if they could crush stone with ease. His long, thick, heavy tail ended in a huge, spiked, club-like mace, and his short, thick neck, thick, flat back, and tail were covered in salagmite-like spikes. His head was like that of a T. Rex, with large, heavy jaws full of sharp, bone-crunching teeth, large, flaring nostrils, and a frill of horns framing the back. His calm eyes were a deep green in color, standing out against his earthly brown color.

Drobot was a copper-brown in color with a green underbelly. His wings were part of his cyborg parts, resembling bendable airplane wings with helicopter propellers built within them. his tail ended in a large, golden metallic blade, and the length of his spine were plated in over-lapping, triangle-shaped plates, also the same color as his tailblade. His viper-shaped head was mostly robotic, with a green lower jaw fused by two large jaw plates, gold rimming the head, a long, golden shark fin-like crest going backwards from his head, and glowing green robot eyes. All of his robotic parts were a deep navy-blue in color.

And just as it seemed it couldn't get any worse for Twilight and her friends, Sunburn was last.

Sunburn had dark orange scales and feathers covering his body, with a dark blue underbelly and fiery-yellow feathered wings; at first Twilight thought he was a griffin, but she soon realized he was a Pheonix/Dragon hybrid! He had feathered wings like those of a bird instead of a bat, his long tail had feathers lining it but ended with a arrowtip, and all four of his legs knee/elbow's down were like those of a bird's, gold in color and with long bird-like talons. His head was like that of an eagle, with a sharp golden beak, a long, yellow, horn-like crest growing backwards from his head, and his red/blue eyes, with feathery crests surrounding them, held a calm sort of authority about him.

"MOVE!" Rainbow Dash cried as she saw the dragon began it literally glow with fire as he charged up his power. Twilight snapped out of her fascination and quickly preformed a teleportation spell, transporting out of the way and up onto the crater wall...and just in time too.

The beam of flame Sunburn fired was so dense and powerful it resembled a beam of pure orange light, blazing forward with the fury of the sun itself. It soared across the earth, leaving a molten line of lava in it's path, before blasting straight through the hole Spyro had made before. When he was done, the hole had been expanded to more than twice its original size.

"Prehistorian Dragons win!" Whirlwind cheered, high-winging Camo. All the Prehistorian Dragons cheered and high-fived each other, while the Equestrain Dragons grumbled in annoyance.

The three ponies laid there in exhaustion, their costume once again a crazy pile of limbs and fabric. "Should've...teleported away...before the first one..." Twilight wheezed dizzily before collapsing.

"Tail Wrestling!"

This games were set up in a diminishing-the-players fashion: one of each team start, and whoever lost of those two would be excluded from the match, and then the winner would face the next player of the other team and would continue facing those players until he would be defeated, kicked out of the match, and replaced by the dragon after him or her. Which ever team ran out of dragons first was the loser, and the other side won.

First up was Camo, who locked tails with the gray/blond dragon with ram-like horns. "Ready..." Garble began. "GO!"

The two dragons pulled hard, grunting in stress as they did so...but soon, Camo's sturdy, four-legged Prehistorian structure proved more durable than just two legs, and with one final yank, but pulled up the other teen, causing him to fall to the ground.

"The Winner!" Garble announced, holding up Camo's tail like a boxing-match winner's glove. Both sided cheered as Camo grinned, bowing comically to the crowd, while the loser clung to his now bent-up tail painfully.

"Alright, Spike. You're turn!" Garble stated, using his tail to push a freaked-out Spike forward.

"Wait a minute!" Ember shrieked, looking horrified. "We're the ones fighting for him! He's too small for these games of ours!"

But Garble merely snorted. "Sorry, chick, but Spike has yet to prove himself a real dragon." He sneered; Ember looked offended at being called 'chick'. Flame looked ready to tear the other red dragon's throat out. "Maybe tail wrestling is more his speed!"

Spyro was about jump into the argument himself when the ponies in the costume suddenly walked up to them.

"I challenge Spike to a tail-wrestle!" Twilight said in the same manly voice she had used with Spyro. Spyro cringed, fretting that their costume was going to-

"Who's this weirdo?" Garble asked as he and one of his lackeys, a fat, blue one with a spiky frill, look at the costume oddly.

"I think he's Crackle's cousin." The purple/blonde one whispered to him.

All three looked up to a ledge, and Spyro followed their gaze to see a large, green dragon that looked like virtually identical to the ponies' costume, only flesh and blood! Spyro paled in horror; creatures that ugly and freakish actually exist?! The 'dragon' let out a surprised croak before using his two right hind legs to scratch an itch.

"Ah, that would explain it." Garble stated.

'Yeah...and a few other things as well...' Spyro mentally wheezed, his right eye twitching slightly. There goes a few dozen nights of peaceful sleep.

"What the hell is *that*?" Flame asked Spyro, staring at the costume in utter confusion, all the other Prehistorian Dragons looking at it with freaked-out looks. The red dragon suddenly sniffed the air. "I smell ponies."

"Good; that means you're nose is working." Spyro said flatly, looking slightly worried.

All the other dragons of Spyro's group perked up in surprise. "What are a bunch of *ponies* doing here?" Ember asked in a surprised and worried tone.

"They're with me!" Spyro quickly stated, just in case any of his friends were hungry... "They said they're friends with Spike and are here to make sure he doesn't get into trouble." Spyro told them all as they watched the ponies-in-costume take position from Spike, the white leg kicking the tail up so that it locked with Spike's as if it were a real dragon's tail.

Camo, Zap, Bash, Drobot and Flame laughed. "And *just what* do they plan to do *should* trouble show up?" Flame asked, still chuckling.

"That's what *I* asked them." Spyro muttered flatly. "What are these 'Ponies' anyway?" He then asked.

Whirlwind answered that question: "Ponies are the 'main' race of this world, basically the same with humans of your world." She told Spyro. "They're a peaceful race that are split up into three groups: The Earth Ponies, The Pegasi, and the Unicorns. My mother was a Unicorn Pony." This interested Spyro; he knew Whirlwind's mother was a unicorn, but not one of these types.

"They're either very brave or very stupid coming here, especially in a badly-made costume like that one." Sunburn said sternly, glaring at the costume as Spike tried hard to pull against it, but to no avail. "Since they smell female, I'm guessing the former."

"What's *that* suppose to mean?!" All the other males dragons asked in unison.

Cynder made her way next to Spyro, standing next to him and speaking in hushed tones. "Are they some of the friends Spike was talking about?" She asked in a whisper.

Spyro nodded. "Yeah, they followed Spike here to watch him." He whispered back. "From the descriptions, I say that the one on top is Twilight Sparkle, the one with the eye-holes below the head is Rainbow Dash, and the white legs in the back is Rarity. I spoke with them earlier and they each fit the description Spike described them by."

"What are you planning to do?" She then asked.

"Make sure they get out alive."

Suddenly the ponies, who were obviously wanting Spike to win, suddenly collapsed, making it appear that Spike had actually won and pulled the other dragon down. "Spike's the winner!" Garble announced, holding Spike up by the tail. They all cheered and Garble dropped Spike. "Nice going, little Spike. Maybe you are a dragon after all." He stated, flicking the baby dragon's nose.

"Yeah! Maybe I am!" Spike said hopefully.

"Rainbow Dash, I can't believe your silly plan actually worked!" Rarity told the pegasus as they began moving away from the fighting ring. Rainbow frowned before she bucked Rarity with her hoof, causing her head to form in the costume for a second. "Ow." Rarity stated flatly.

"What were you three thinking?" Spyro hissed as he approached them, keeping his voice down so the other dragons wouldn't hear.

"We were just helping Spike." Twilight told him in a whisper, using her real voice. "We didn't want him getting hurt."

"Too late for that." Spyro suddenly stated, turning his gaze back to the arena.

"WHOOOOOOOOA!" Spike cried as he was flung through the air by a sea-green, almost nerdy-looking dragon with an *enormous* tail, smacking against the cliff wall near a pair of adult dragons rather painfully. Spyro and the three mares cringed at the sight, everyone watching silently as Spike slid back down the cliff side.

The rest of the Tail Wrestling contest was slaughter for the Prehistorians: Camo alone managed to best them up until the sea-green dragon from before. One by one this mountain-tailed dragon catapulted them out of the match: first Camo, then Cynder, Ember, Flame, Whirlwind, Zap, Drobot, Sunburn, and Bash. Bash actually had put up quite the fight, using his massive saurian strength along with his earth element to pull against the other dragon's strength, but lost when he lost his footing, joining the other Prehistorian Dragons at the big pile with Spike at the base of the cliff.

Then it was Spyro's turn. He wrapped his tail around the other dragon's large tail, carefully avoiding the spikes covering the tip. "Ready?" Garble asked, watching with his arms crossed. "Go!"

Spyro immediately began pulling, but it took all of his strength to keep from being thrown; His claws dug into the earth as he struggled against the other dragon's strength. He cracked an eye open and glanced back to see said dragon breathing harder than usual; yes, his tail was big and strong, but the rest of him wasn't, and he was beginning to tire from the non-stop tug of wars.

That's when an idea popped into the purple dragon's head, and he grinned in anticipation: readying himself, he, quite suddenly took a step backwards. The sudden release of tension was too much for the green dragon's puny legs, and he let out a surprised cry as he stumbled forward, waving his arms around to keep his balance. His opponent's grip on the earth gone,

Spyro closed his eyes, tapping into the power within him, letting it flow throughout his entire body: the power of the purple dragon.

His body glowing with purple fire, he opened his eyes, which were now blazing with pure white light like twin suns, and with a mighty yank, he pulled the entire dragon off the ground and flipped him up over his head, slamming him down in front of himself with a powerful crash.

There was a stunned silence at first...and then cheering. Even the Equestrian Dragons were congratulating him, both sides cheering in a gang-style.

"Nice *going*, purple boy!" Garble said, slapping the now-normal Spyro on the back in a friendly manner, completely impressed this time. "Nobody's been able to beat that guy in Tail Wrestling before! You're one tough dragon!"

Spyro grinned. "It's not the size of a dragon in a fight. It's the size of a fight in a dragon." He stated proudly.

Twilight, however, was stunned speechless, her jaw hanging agape in disbelief and her eyes wide with horror. Never had she seen a dragon, or any other creature for that matter...other than Princess Celestia, Discord, and Nightmare Moon...wield that kind of power! When he had tapped into that glowing purple energy, both her and Rarity's horns began radiating with a powerful magic: The air became saturated with arcane energy...magic energy...a kind that was disturbingly familiar, but just couldn't remember what.

Just what kind of dragon *was this*?

"Well, Spike..." Garble stated as he carried Spike up to the top of a giant pile of gems and gold coins. "Your Purple Prehistoric Pal and his friends have proven themselves tough dragons, but you haven't even proven yourself a dragon yet..." He dropped the small dragon onto the top of the gempile. "Have you?"

"But...I get an A for effort?" Spike asked once he got up, looking nervous.

"Well, maybe..." Garble said in a thoughtful tone. "Let's see how you do in this *next* contest." He stated. And with that, he pushed Spike off the hill with a slap to the back.

"Whaaaaa!" Spike cried out, bouncing rather painfully down the hill. "Oof! Wha! Oah!" Luckily, Ember caught him before he hit the ground, sending a deadly glare up at the red dragon.

"*King Of The Hoaaaaaaaard*!" Garble roared in a war-cry fashion. The other dragons all roared their own battle cries as they began scaling the mountain of treasure.

The dragons had decided to flip a coin to decide which team claimed the top of the hoard; it wasn't that hard to find one, having plenty gold coins throughout their hoards of treasure. The

Equestrian Dragons won the coin-toss, which Flame claimed was bullshit, and decided amongst themselves who should have the top, which naturally turned out to be Garble. The goal of the game was for the Prehistorian Dragons to claim the hill for themselves, and for the Equestrian Dragons to keep their position, which would reverse should the Prehistorians succeed in gaining the mountain.

As planned, Spyro went straight for Garble while the others held off the other dragons, the purple dragon slithering in and out of the squabbling dragons as one by one went flying off the mound. Sunburn used his fiery power to shove the fat blue dragon off the mound. Poor Camo was completely obliterated by the big fat brown dragon, screaming as he went flying off the mound with a crash, followed by the green-grey dragon with ram horns that was smacked away like a baseball by Bash's tail.

Spyro soon reached Garble, who had just sent Ember flying; the red dragon spotted him coming, though, and the two locked in a fierce struggle or brute strength: Garble grabbed onto Spyro's horns, forcing the purple dragon back, but Spyro held his ground, pushing back just as ferociously, both dragons glaring each other down as they fought.

During the whole battle, Spike nervously made his way up the hill, panting as he went; he had no idea what he was going to do once here got there, though, but he would try...to prove himself a real dragon.

The purple/blonde dragon tried to come up from behind Spike and get him, but Twilight and the others stopped them. "No so fast!" Rainbow Dash cried, apparently dragging the costume and other two ponies with her as she tackled the surprised dragon, forcing them all to the ground.

"This is my chance!" Spike whispered to himself, seeing the two lead dragons teetering dangerously close to the edge of the mound. Using every ounce of dragon strength he had, Spike came up behind Garble and pushed him upwards from behind. The tiny amount of excess force was all the two surprised dragons needed to lose their balance and go tumbling down the side of the hoard, joining the other teens in a big pile of limbs, wings, horns, claws, and tails.

Spike cracked open an eye nervously, but his face turned to one of surprise and his eyes opened all the way to see he was the only one on the mound.

He did it.

"King of the Hoar-!" He began proudly... "-WHOAAAAA!" ...Only to slip on the loose coins and tumble down the mound. "Oof! Uh! Nuh! Oof!" Landing right at Garble's feet.

"Looks like this is another fail for you, little Spike." The red dragon sneered with his arms folded. "Can't wait to watch you fail at Lava Cannonball, too."

Spike swallowed nervously.

For the final event of their Big Contest, the dragons, including Twilight and her friends in their costume, all found themselves standing at the top of a large cliff in the crater, beneath which, about fifty feet down, was a large pool of molten lava. Spyro could feel the intense heat rising from the pool of molten rock, but what would be a instant death for a pony would be a dip in a hot-tub for a dragon. Both teams had competed in multiple contests before this, and now both teams were tied five to five in points.

"Whoever makes the biggest Lava Splash is the ultimate dragon!" Garble announced only seconds before diving off the cliff. "*Geronimooooo*!" He yelled as he dove through the air and touched-down into the lava, creating a large splash of lava. A drop of it flew up and landed near Rainbow Dash's hoof, who moved her limb to avoid the heat.

"Spike's on his own this time..." Twilight whispered to herself, she and other ponies sneaking away without any dragons noticing...except for Spyro.

'No, he's not.' The purple dragon thought to himself.

One by one the dragons all dove into the pool, all giving off yells of 'coolness' as they splash into the pool below; most of the dragons made moderate splashes, all being about the same size as the first one. Bash made a huge splash, thanks to his bigger size, but even that was outmatched by the fat brown dragon, who yelled "Cannonball!" as he too jumped off the edge. The splash was so big, a few dragons nearby might have thought the volcano was erupting.

Soon the only dragons left were Spike and Spyro.

"Come on, Spyro! You're the last chance we got to win!" Cynder called up to him from the pool.

Spyro nodded slightly, stepping forward to the ledge. He first glanced down to see where the pool was...before tapping into his inner power again. Once more Twilight, who was watching with the other two mares in the dragon costume some distance away, could feel the incredible power flowing through him, her horn slightly vibrating from the magic build-up in the air around the dragon. His body glowing with purple fire once more, he opened his glowing eyes once more and leapt off the cliff and into the air; just before he began falling, he curled up into a giant ball and spun at incredible speeds like a big wheel. A blazing purple fire of Dragon Magic burst around the spinning dragon, transforming him into a blazing comet of purple fire and magic, shooting toward the lava at blinding speed.

BOOM!

The impact was so powerful it drained the entire pool, creating a coloum of lava the size of the entire crater. From outside, it truly looked like the volcano was actually erupting, and every dragon on the mountain roared in alarm, the closer ones quickly flying away and the farther ones watching in shock. The lava then gushed back down in a single splash, creating a wave of molten rock that swept throughout the carter; the ponies cried out in alarm before Twilight teleported them all up onto the size of the crater.

Soon the pool refilled and Spyro resurfaced, shaking his head free from lava. He opened his now-normal eyes to see the other dragon teens, even his own friends, staring at him with eyes wide as dinner plates and jaws hanging slack in shock. Spyro chuckled; if only they could see the looks on their faces.

Cynder was the first to snap out of it, declaring the thought that brought her out of her stupor. "Prehistorian Dragons win! We're the Ultimate Dragons!" She cheered loudly.

This was enough to snap the other Prehistorians out of their daze, resulting in them all cheering in victory. Zap high-winged Sunburn, while Bash fist-bumped Drobot. Camo did a excited backwards flip back into the lava with a splash, which 'accidently' splashed over Whirlwind. Cynder nearly crushed Spyro in a thrilled bear hug, while Ember did the same with Flame.

The Equestrian Dragons were at a loss for words. "How...what was...how did..." Garble stammered, before shaking his head to snap out of it. "Dude! That was *wicked*! How'd you do that?!" He asked Spyro.

Spyro shrugged honestly. "To be honest I wasn't expecting a blast that big either. I was just using my power to assist my impact; I didn't know it would be *that* big." He told the leader of the Equestrians. "You guys did pretty well yourselves; gave us a real challenge."

Garble re-assumed his usual sneer, but it wasn't as hostile anymore. "Well, that comes naturally..." He said proudly. "...but heck, you guys won, and I'll admit it this time around...but don't expect us to lose so easily next time."

Spyro smirked himself. "I won't. You can count on that." He stated; the two then high-winged, the two sides all talking and laughing together.

Garble then looked back up at the cliff above them, an annoyed, impatient glare adorning his face. "Well, you guys may be the ultimate dragons, but *SOMEBODY* has yet to even jump!" He called up to Spike, who had yet to jump. The yell snapped Spike out of his stupor, the baby wingless dragon giving a cry of surprise and fear when he remembered how high up he really was, retreating back against the rock wall behind him. "What's wrong, Spike? You afraid the lava will hurt your soft pony hide?!" Garble taunted, he and his gang laughing soon after. Flame, Bash, and Camo also laughed, until Ember elbowed Flame in the ribs, sending a deathly glare his and the other two dragon's way.

"He doesn't have to do this!" Cynder whispered to Spyro, her face and voice full of worry. "Stop him! He's only going to get hurt!"

"I can't." Spyro whispered back reassuringly. "Spike's the only one who can decide."

But he made a rather stupid choice: After a moment, Spike stopped shaking and stood confidently at the end of the cliff. Finally, he took a gulp and dove in, screaming as he fell. Unfortunately, he dove the wrong way, causing him to bellyflop onto the lava.

SMACK!

"Oooooh...!" All the dragons in the pool, including Spyro and Cynder, exclaimed, flinching at the sound and idea of the pain poor Spike must be feeling as he sank limply into the lava. Dragon or not, that *had* to hurt.

Surprisingly, Spike surfaced a few seconds later, seemingly unhurt, spitting out a stream of lava as he did so. He looked about to see the other dragons, who were all staring at him with surprised and even impressed faces. "Uhhh...was I...*that* bad?" He asked nervously.

"No, dude, that was awesome!" Garble responded. "No pony could live through a bellyflop like that!" He chuckled and lifted him by his scale. "You're one tough little dragon." He said before releasing him.

Spyro rolled his eyes; typical teenagers...oh well, at least Spike wasn't harmed and he gained the other dragon's respect. He had to admit, though. For someone that small and young to survive a bellyflop like that without a bellyache for the rest of the week *was* pretty impressive.

Once that event was over, they created some ritual they made themselves: at the blowing of the gray-green dragon's nose, the dragon teens all formed a royal-styled path toward Garble with their tails, the Equestrian Dragons on the left and the Prehistorian Dragons on the right, for Spike and Spyro to walk under. Spyro thought it was silly, and Spike seemed confused, but both dragons walked forward anyway until they stopped in front of Garble.

"Spike, by belly flopping so hard, you have proven yourself worthy." He announced; he then used his tail to pat Spike's shoulder's in a knighting fashion. "I hereby dub you 'Rookie Dragon'." He then turned to Spyro. "Spyro, for winning the Big Contest by that awesome comet ball, I hereby dub you 'Ultimate Dragon'." He said, repeating the same knighting fashion.

Spyro thought it ridiculous for someone to just dub him his rightful title, but he went along with it; It was kinda fun, anyway. He glanced over to Cynder, who grinned and gave him a playful wink.

"...and will now perform the initiation ritual." Garble then said; the 'initiation ritual' was locking them in a headlock and giving them a noogie, first Spyro and then Spike. Spike stumbled away with dizzily spinning eyes, while Spyro grumbled as he used a paw to straighten his head frill. "Now let's party *Dragon Style*!"

The dragons all cheered before partying like no tomorrow. The partying consisted of crazy dancing, chowing down on gems, and flying about the sky while performing all sorts of fun tricks. Spyro used his tail to scoop up Spike and set him on his back before taking off, joining Cynder, Flame, and Ember in the sky. The four prehistoric dragons partied by racing about Dragon Mountain, with an excited Spike riding on Spyro's back the whole time, all five of them enjoying the majestic sight of the sacred mountains and the dragons currently there. Many of

these dragons complimented and congratulated Spyro for his amazing comet ball, to which he humbly thanked him.

In other words. The party was awesome.

As the dragons partied, Twilight and the other two ponies watched from the side of the valley, trying to keep out of the way without looking suspicious; they were failing, but as usual none of the dragons seemed to notice.

"Huh, I guess for a dragon, that purple one's not so bad." Rainbow Dash stated.

"Yes, he does seem nice enough; he also has a nice color combination. Purple and Gold gives him a bold and heroic aura." Rarity said thoughtfully. "But I just *love* the colors of his black dragoness friend." She then said. "Black and Red just *sings* danger and mystery! They're absolutely inspiring!"

Rainbow Dash rolled her eyes. "Yeah, they're okay, I guess." She said, annoyed by Rarity's usual fashtonia persona. "What do you think, Twilight?" She then asked.

Twilight, however, didn't answer. She just watched Spike laugh and cheer about while riding and playing with the purple and black dragons with a sad face. He seemed so happy, the happiest she had seem him in a long time...like he truly belonged here. Her number-one assistant was finally in a place where he felt like he belonged, and in good company; true, the first dragons weren't the type that would be good company to hang around, but the purple one from before and his friends gladly accepted him, even standing up for not only him, but for her and the other ponies, even if he didn't even know them. She guessed dragons were more like ponies than most thought: there were good dragons and bad dragons, just like there were good ponies and bad ponies.

'Spike would be happier here.' Twilight thought to herself, the tears already forming in her eyes. "Let's go girls." She then said sadly.

This surprised Rarity and Rainbow Dash. "What?! But what about Spike?!" The latter asked.

Twilight sighed, the first tears flowing down her cheeks. "He's staying here."

"But, darling!" Rarity began.

"Please Rarity, don't." Twilight begged, her voice sounding close to heartbreak. "Look at him; he's so much happier here than he would be with us. He...he belongs here...with his own kind." She sobbed, more tears flowing from her eyes.

"But-"

"Let's just go." She whispered, closing her eyes sadly.

"LOOK OUT BELOOOOW!" They heard Spike scream.

That snapped Twilight out of her sorrow and Rainbow Dash and Rarity out of their horrified confusion. At that moment Spyro had been tackled by Flame in another friendly fight, both dragons and Spike plummeting to the earth below...and right toward the girls in their costume! All three of them screamed and tried to run, but with Rainbow trying to fly and with Rarity running in the opposite direction, it was completely hopeless.

CRASH!

The two male dragons crashed into the costume, ripping it to pieces with the sounds of tearing fabric. Twilight screamed as she and the head when flying to the side, crashing into the ground where Spyro slid to a stop, Spike flying off his back with a scream, while Flame tore through the body, sending Rainbow Dash and Rarity tumbling out and crashing into a big pile with him.

Spyro groaned as he stood back up on his feet, looking down to see the decapitated head of the ponies' dragon costume...and a form within the cloth of the neck, struggling and squirming about trying to free itself, a muffled voice sounding from within. Spyro cocked his head in confusion before using his claws to rip the costume open near the head of the person trapped inside.

Twilight stopped struggling for a second...before slowly pushing her head out of the tear made in the costume, looking up from under the cover of the cloth at the large saurian before her, fear filling her eyes.

Spyro blinked in surprise when he saw the unicorn before him. Her face wasn't like a horse's at all; it was almost *human* in appearance, very closely resembling the faces of the Eeveelution Pokemon from Poke-World. Her mane was more like human hair as well, even styled like hair, and instead of just a thick horse skin she was covered in short, soft-looking fur, even her 'hooves', if that's what her feet were supposed to be. Her fur and horn were lavender-purple in color, and her hair was a deep plum in color with a pink-and-purple stripe running horizontally through it. Standing on her legs she would only be almost four feet tall, a little less than half his own height.

Flame groaned in pain as he lifted his head up, opening his eyes to see a pair of magenta eyes fluttering open in front of him. His and Rainbow Dash's eyes snapped open when they saw each other, both Pegasi and Dragon jumping back in surprise, crying/roaring in alarm.

Rarity opened her eyes to find Spike laying on his stomach in front of her, the baby dragon groaning as he sat up, opening his eyes to see the object of his romantic desires sitting in front of him.

"*Rarity*?!" He exclaimed in shock. He looked about at the other ponies. "*Rainbow?! Twilight?! What are you guys doing here?!*" He cried in shock and disbelief.

"Good question..." Spyro growled sternly, glaring down at the unicorn before him. It was merely a glare of thought, but it certainly didn't look that way.

Twilight whimpered in terror, retreating slightly back into the costume. "*P-P-Please* d-d-don't h-h-hurt u-u-us." She begged, cowering to the ground before the purple dragon before her; he was *much* bigger when she was looking at him from ground level. "W-W-We d-didn't m-m-mean any h-h-harm."

Spyro's angry glare faded, a sympathetic smile taking it's place. "Like I said before, you won't get any from me." He told her softly, a reassuring warmth filling his tone; he then reached his paw forward and scooped it around Twilight's waist, lifting her up out of the shreds of cloth in a saurian fashion. Twilight cringed, covering her eyes with her hooves and trembled in fear, but found no harm as the dragon slowly lowered her back down to the ground in front of him; the moment the lavender unicorn touched the ground she scrambled away from the purple dragon, backing up her trembling body against the side of the cliff, her eyes full of terror. Spyro's eyes narrowed in concern before he lowered his head down to her level.

"N-N-No...p-p-please..." Twilight whimpered, tears running down her cheeks.

Spyro paused, staring with pity at the terrified unicorn, before closing the gap between them and gently nuzzled the side of her head, purring softly. Twilight froze, curling up in a fetal position while whimpering in fear.

"Shhhhhh...calm down." He soothed softly, continuing to caress the side of her head with his snout. "I'm not going to hurt you." He then continued to soothe her, purring softly as he nuzzled her mane.

Suddenly their was a multitude of thuds on the ground around them, and Spyro looked back to see dozens of dragons landing around him and the ponies. His Prehistorian friends and the Equestrians Teens were there, along with many adult dragons, Equestrian and Prehistorian alike; most of them were glaring at the ponies in anger and distrust, some even growling in response. Twilight's heart tightened in terror at the sight of these giant monsters surrounding she and her friends.

"I *knew* I smelled pony back at Tail Wrestling." Garble growled, arms folded against his chest. "Well, boys! Looks like *dinner's* been served early!" He announced to his gang, who all growled hungrily in response.

But before any dragon could make a move, Spyro turned around and stood in front of Twilight and the other two, slamming his forepaw to the ground warningly.

"No. None of you will not *touch* them." He growled threateningly, glaring at the other dragons.

"Ponies aren't allowed on this mountain without permission from the Dragon Lords. They have shunned and forsaken the peace agreement between our kinds by doing this." A large, red Equestrian Dragon told Spyro; Rainbow Dash's eyes widened in fear and recognition when she realized he was the same dragon that had settled in the mountain almost a full year ago. The one Fluttershy had cowed with her 'Stare'.

"I doubt that these ponies here even know about the ancient laws of old, let alone mean to willfully break them." Spyro stated calmly back. "They came here to help and protect an orphaned hatchling that they had raised since egghood; if anything else I believe they are honoring our peace, not forsaking it!"

"Yeah!" Spike suddenly said, stepping forward with his newfound idol. "They're my friends, ponies or not! If I can come here, why can't they?"

"Spyro's right!" Cynder said, flying up from the crowd and landing next to her brother, joining him at his side. "They've done nothing wrong! Why judge them for something they haven't done against us?!"

Flame got up from his fallen position, joining his rival with protecting the 'intruders'. "To punish them for something so minor is an act only Humans would commit!" He snarled as Ember walked up to him and stood by his side. "Do you really want to demote yourselves down to *their* level?"

"Besides..." Whirlwind suddenly spoke up, joining the other teens. "...my mother was a Unicorn Pony, one of them!" She told them all. "To kill them would be killing the ones who brought a fellow dragon into this world."

The dragons began murmuring amongst each other, some actually moved by their words.

Twilight could only stare up at the dragon standing above her, her eyes full of wonder and graditute.

"They are under my protection, and as the *Legendary Purple Dragon*, I will die protecting their lives." He growled, now all of his friends joining him. "So...who whats to battle the defeater of the Snakeasaurus first?" He challenged, his eyes glowing purple as he charged up his power.

"That's enough, young dragon."

All the dragons turned to the voice to see a large dragon approaching them, the crowed quickly parting to the sides to allow this dragon plently of space, all the other dragons bowing in respect...even Garble and his gang, which surprised Spyro greatly.

This dragon was even larger than Terrador and possibly the largest on the entire mountain, standing a good twenty-five feet tall on all four legs. His scales were a very dark red in color, almost black, and his underbelly, wing membrane, and tailblade where all a dark gold color. He had four long horns that grew backwards and curved upwards, the top-right one being broken at the halfway point. A large scar ran down from the broken horn, across his undamaged right eye, and down to his upper jaw near the tip of his long yet thick snout. A row of large spines ran down his back all the way to his tailblade, which was shaped like a deadly sword with sharp spikes framing the sides. His arms, shoulders, chest, legs, and *massive* wings bore large, fire-shaped plates that formed around his body like armor. His eyes were a brilliant

golden-orange in color with silt pupils, and adorning his head was a impressive helmet/crown with a black crystal in the center.

The dragon approached Spyro in a way that reminded Twilight of Princess Celestia: tall, proud, noble, but at the same time calm, understanding, and willing to listen. Spyro took a defense stance, ready to battle should the need arise to that. The dragon merely chuckled in an almost fatherly manner at his stance.

"You do not need to resort to battle, young dragon." He told him, his voice deep, strong, yet surprisingly gentle. "For you have no need to protect the ponies." Spyro softened, looking confused. "Your words are truly ones of wisdom, far exceeding your age. Ignitus said this was one of your many honorable traits, purple one...and because you are the purple dragon of prophecy and wish these ponies safety, they will be pardoned of their trespassing, and *no one is to harm them*." He said this strictly to the crowd watching, all of which quickly back down.

Twilight felt like she was going to faint, a heavy sigh of relief escaping her lungs as she slid limply onto her stomach; Rarity actually did, with the usual over-dramatic flair. Rainbow Dash looked extremely relieved herself, this time making no attempts to hide it from anyone.

"Who *are* you?" Spyro asked.

"I am Lord Volcanus, High King and Fire Lord of the Equestrian Dragons." He told him, standing tall and proud, before turning away. "Your presence is required at the Mountain Council, Spyro...and is yours, *Twilight Sparkle*."

Twilight looked shocked at the mention of her name. "H-H-How did you..." She began, her voice fading into flummuxed stammers.

Volcanus chuckled as looking back at the flabbergasted unicorn. "Your mentor and ruler is awaiting your presence there." He said. That only made it worse for the already frazzled unicorn, who merely fell backwards with a wheezing 'Bleaaaaahhh...', landing on her back with a crash.

Mountain Council, a few minutes later:

The council was possibly the most impressive part of the entire mountain, carved from a large crater near the center of the volcano. A grand draconic throne stood at the north end of the large round room, with multiple smaller thrones set up around the center room, the floor of the great hall carved to resemble the great image of the Dragon Elements, each element facing the throne they represented: Fire at the grand throne, with Electricity, Ice, Shadow, Earth, and Wind around the room in that order clockwise.

It was on the grand throne Lord Volcanus was currently sitting, overlooking the currently empty council, being nearly empty since the debate at hand didn't involved the other Dragon Lords.

Sitting in the other thrones of the council Ignitus, Volteer, Cyril, and Terrador, Cyril and Volteer on the dragon's left, and Ignitus and Terrador to his right, each sitting in their respective elements...except for Ignitus, who stood next to Volcanus.

Spyro, Twilight, Rainbow Dash, Rarity, and Spike were currently walking (or flying in Rainbow Dash's case) down the path that would lead them into the great crater.

Twilight looked up at Spyro, gently nudging his upper arm with her snout, getting his attention. "Thank you for what you did before." She said softly. "Spyro, was it? You saved our lives."

Spyro nodded in response. "I couldn't just stand there and let them tear you apart, especially for something you didn't truly do." He told them truthfully. "Anyone with a good heart would've done the same."

"But you're a *dragon*." Twilight continued quietly, looking really moved and grateful. "We're *ponies*; nothing more than food toward your kind...so why even bother?"

"Does that really matter?" Spyro asked, looking back at the much smaller unicorn. "I have nothing against your kind, and even if I did, were still the same in here." He used a wing to point to Twilight's chest. "Our bodies and ways may be as different as day and night...but we all have a heart, no matter if we have fur or scales. It's that simple."

Twilight smiled.

Spike, however, just looked cross, puny arms folded against his chest and eyebrows furrowed. "Well, I guess I couldn't handle myself after all, huh?" He muttered bitterly.

"We're sorry, Spike." Twilight said apologetically. "But we only followed you because we care about you; we just wanted to make sure you were safe."

The baby dragon sighed. "Yeah, yeah, I know." He stated whistfully. "At least we are going to make it outta here okay, thanks to Spyro here." He then paused. "We *are* making it outta here okay, right?"

"Naturally." Spyro said with a grin just before they stepped out into the floor of the council; from there Rainbow Dash, Rarity, and Spike headed off to the side, standing next to Ignitus and Terrador, leaving Twilight and Spyro standing alone before the Kings and Queens of the Dragon Kingdom.

It was then Spyro and Twilight saw another bearer of a royal title standing next to King Volcanus, accompanied by a duo of royal guards...one that the latter regconized with a shocked expression and Spyro looked upon with awe.

She was another pony, but she was far larger than Twilight and her friends, standing more than twice the unicorn's height at a impressive nine feet, even taller than Spyro...but by no means big, bulky, and heavy. She was the vision of pure beauty, her entire being radiating with a

heavenly appearance and form. Her mane and tail looked like they were made of an aurora light of light pink, blue, and green shades, flowing through the air like a flowing river, her mane also covering her right eye. Her fur was pure white, even brighter than Rarity's, and she seemed to glow with a gentle, golden gleam of light. What's more she had both wings and a horn; An Alicorn, if Spyro guessed right. Her horn was more than three times the length of Twilight's short horn, and were wings were large and majestic like an eagle's. Her cutie mark was that of the sun, and it too seemed to glow with power. On her head she wore a large, golden tiara with a purple jewel in the center, along with a matching gold chestpiece and horseshoes.

"Princess Celestia?!" Twilight asked in utter surprise, her eyes wider than dinner plates. "What are *you* doing *here*?"

"I could ask you the same thing, my young student." Celestia said in a warm tone; her voice was calm and motherly, a gentle loving tone to her every word. "I always come here during the Dragon Migration to discuss peace and diplomatic meetings with the Dragon Lords, to ensure peace between ponies and dragons. However, the Guardians of Prehistoria have asked me of a special request concerning the purple dragon next to you."

Spyro perked up in surprise, looking toward the guardians. "What request?" He asked.

"You have yet to learn the Element of Magic, Spyro." Terrador, Guardian of Earth, told them. "And since a Guardian of Magic is non-existent, we've taken the matter up with Princess Celestia."

Terrador was the largest of the guardians, standing almost 20 feet tall on all four legs; his entire body was solid, thick, and made of pure muscle and bone, indicating he was an earth dragon. His scales were a dark earthly green in color, and his underbelly and wing-membrane were a deep rust-red in color. His horns were huge, and curled downwards like ram horns, starting a trail of brown stalagmite-like chunks running down his spines and decorating his limbs/head, his tail ending it a solid, spiked-covered mace, also brown in color. His eyes were a brighter green in color, with silt pupils that were more rounded out than the others.

Celestia nodded. "Spyro, was it?" She asked. "I have agreed to help you learn Magic; the guardians and I have arranged for you to live and learn under my guidance in Equestria."

"*WHAT*?!" Twilight, Rainbow Dash, and Rarity all cried out in surprise and disbelief.

"But, Princess!" Rainbow Dash said aggressively, zooming over to Celestia and hovering in front of her face. "He's a *Dragon*! And not a cute, little dragon like Spike! But a big, ferocious dragon-"

"That just *saved your life*, Rainbow Dash." Celestia reminded her, still keeping a calm tone and volume. "Don't you believe that's enough proof needed to know how good he really is?"

"Well...I..." Any arguement that the rainbow-maned pegasus had died in her throat at those words.

Cyril, Guardian of Ice, snorted an icy mist from his nostrils. "You're not the only one who holds distrust with the other race, pegasus." He stated in a pompus, slightly aggravated manner. "How do we guarantee that we can trust you ponies with our hero of legend?"

Cryil was only slightly smaller than Ignitus, about 17 feet in height, and his body covered in light-blue scales. He has six horns, two large ones that went straight backwards and slightly upwards, and four smaller ones framing his face beneath the first two, all colored a pale lavender, except for the short nose horn standing between his nostrils. His underbelly was also a lavender purple in color, as was the spike-covered tail blade ending his tail, but his wing membranes were a sliverly blue in color, just like the jagged stripes running down his body. His eyes were lavender in color with silt pupils, and were filled with pride and dignity.

"That's why I'm here to discuss this with you." Volcanus said. "The dragons of Equestria will keep an eye on him should things get out of hand."

"B-But, Princess." Twilight began, stepping forward. "Won't you be too busy with your royal duties to tend to a dragon? Who else could possibly watch over him and teach him your magic?"

All eyes fell on the purple unicorn.

"...Oh, No. N-n-n-n-n-n-no!" Twilight quickly stammered, similar to the day Fluttershy stole Celestia's pet pheonix to nurse it back to health. Celestia had that familiar 'I've suddenly got a brilliant and possibly dangerous idea' smirk on her face; a look Spyro regconized from his mother and sister constantly.

"You are the only unicorn in all of Equestria that wields magic of alicorn levels." Celestia told her panicking student. "And, as I have told King Volcanus just recently, you also have the most experience with dragons of anypony. That's why I had sent a letter to you just before requesting your presence here...but I see now that you and Spike had already found your way into sacred dragon land." She said this last part with a slightly stern tone, giving her student a questioning look.

"Wait...you mean that was the letter Spike coughed up during the dragon's..." Twilight paused, grimacing at the next word. "...*belching* contest?"

"The one you said was from the 'Namby Pamby Pony Princess'?" Cynder, from the dragon teens' hiding place, where they were all watching the council, whispered coyly to Garble; the red dragon cringed, grinning sheepishly with a nervous chuckle.

Celestia nodded, making good use of her eternal wisdom and ignoring the comment of a belching contest. "Twilight Sparkle, I hereby place the purple dragon known as Spyro under your care and tutorship; he'll be staying with you in PonyVille and you'll be teaching him the Element of Magic during his time in Equestria. You may also consider it your punishment for violating this sacred land, as minor as your offense may be."

"B-B-B-But I'm not ready for this!" Twilight panicked, fidgeting about nervously on the spot. "I'm still under *your* tutorship! I can't take an apprentance of my own yet! And the only dragon experience I have is with baby dragons!"

"Hey!" Spike snapped, folding his arms in indignity.

"I-I-I can't do this!" The purple unicorn gasped, beginning to hyperventilate. "I-I'm not a good teacher! I'm not fit for this big a task! What if I mess up and start a great dragon-pony war! What if-!"

She never got to ask the next 'What if', for at that moment Celestia's horn lit up with a golden aura of magic, which covered Twilight's entire body. Spyro nearly cringed when he felt the sheer amount of power radiate from the alicorn's horn; it was at godly levels, matching that of even Arceus or Spode themselves! Little wonder she was the ruler of this world.

As for Twilight, all the fret and worry frying her brains out immediately faded into a wonderful, soothing feeling filling her entire body. She gave a relaxed sigh as she sank down onto her rump, her dreary head hanging slightly in exhaustion; the spell faded some time later, leaving the unicorn tired but relieved.

"I wouldn't be selecting you if I wasn't confident in your abilities, Twilight Sparkle." Celestia assured her gently, a warm smile adorning her face. "You are a wonderful student, Twilight, and you always have been; in all the years you've been my student I have never once doubted you, and I'm not starting today." Her smile then faded into a slightly worried one. "This task is very important not just for this dragon to learn magic, but to insure the future safety of both ponies and dragons alike, including you both. It is a heavy task, and that's exactly why I chose my most trusted student to carry it. I believe in you, Twilight...and I'm counting on you."

Twilight nodded softly, her eyes looking tired but willing. "Yes, Princess." She said with a slight bow. "I'll try."

"Good. That's all we can ask." Ignitus said, nodding in approval, before turning to Spyro. "Pack your things, young dragon; you'll leave for PonyVille before sundown."

Spyro nodded before spreading his wings and taking off into the sky, heading back toward the great crater where he and his friends held the contest. Ignitus watched him disappear over the mountain before turning to Celestia. "Are you sure he's the one?" He asked.

Celestia lowered her gaze, a deep, thoughtful gaze adorning her features. "Yes. I am." She told the Fire Guardian softly.

Prehistorian Teens' Cave:

"So, basically, you're going with Twilight and the other ponies back to their kingdom to learn how to use magic, and may not return for a few months or so." Cynder stated as she laid on the outward crop of rock above Spyro; the purple dragon was currently gathering a few things to take with him for his trip. The cave they were in was where Spyro and his Prehistorian friends were currently living in during the Great Dragon Migration. All ten dragons slept and lived in this cave, each having a large outgrowing ledge against the cave wall to sleep on and keep the stuff they had brought. Cynder had chosen the ledge just above Spyro's.

"Pretty much." Spyro stated as he packed; he used his jaws to grab a large bag full of red and green crystal shards, placing it in a dragon's version of a pony's saddlebags.

"And what will mom and dad stay when I return to Coastalis without you?" The black dragoness asked crossly...though Spyro could easily detect the longing in her voice.

"What else?" Spyro asked, placing a large, ancient-looking book in the bags. "Tell them I've just taken up another task from Ignitus and the other guardians, and may not return for a few months." He then placed a bag of dragon treasure from his hoard next, just in case he needed currency. "They'll understand."

"It's not fair." Cynder then murmured, rolling away from him and facing the wall. "You always have to go away on these 'big quests and tasks' and leave us with no brother or son to make our family whole...especially now that we finally have peace in our world; I don't what to lose *another* brother...not after I just lost one..." She finally whispered, tears forming in her eyes.

Spyro paused, still holding the retracted Sword of Light above his shoulder-bags. The purple dragon then sighed as he placed the sword in the bag, pushing his head under the strap of the his bags, working it past his horns and frill before letting them slide down his neck and come to a stop at his shoulders. "You did all that you could, *Melody*." He said, using her true name as he turned toward the door. "Remember that."

At the sound of her real name, Cynder turned to see her brother leaving the cave, her emerald eyes widening in slight horror; Spyro was about to spread his wings when the black dragoness came up from behind, wrapping her arms around her brother and squeezing him tightly, nuzzling the side of his head with her snout.

"I'm gonna miss you, Spyro." She whispered to him.

Spyro smiled warmly. "I'll miss you too." He said, using his wings to hug her back.

They stayed like that for a long time.

"I cannot believe Princess Celestia is actually letting a mature dragon stay in PonyVille! With her own *personal student*, no less!" Rarity exclaimed as she, Twilight, Rainbow Dash, and Spike all waited on the Flight Chariot for their guest, which was standing on the edge on the mountain's

peak; the golden chariot appeared to have two large wings of gold, and hooked up to it where the two of Celestia's Royal Pegasi Guards, ready (and eager) for departure.

"I can't believe that Princess Celestia actually comes and talks to these overgrown lizards." Rainbow Dash stated.

"Overgrown lizards that could probably crush Equestria if they wanted too." Twilight stated tiredly as she rested against the interior of the chariot, exhausted from the rough day behind them. "I always wondered why dragons never attacked Equestria with their great numbers; I guess I now know why."

Spike, however, seemed very excited about the whole thing. "I'm *glad* Spyro's coming to PonyVille! I'll finally have another dragon to hang around with, one that's both not mean and *very cool*!" He continued one excitedly. "I mean, didn't you see the way he blasted down that entire wall with his *awesome* fire breath, or how he totally flipped that big-tailed dragon over his head, or how he made that super awesome incredibly big Lava Splash! Or-"

"We get it! He's a cool dragon." Twilight finally groaned, annoyed to her rope's end with his continued rambling. She then looked thoughtful. "I'm actually looking forward to this as well."

"What? But just before you were *this* close to snapping like a lunatic with panic." Rainbow Dash said, using her hoof to measure her 'closeness'.

Twilight blushed slightly in embarassment. "Yes, I'm still worried about teaching him, but I'm looking forward to what we could learn." She explained. "Ponies know *nothing* about dragons, and now I'll have a chance to spend time with a living, breathing one without getting eaten or roasted. We could learn *lots* about dragons from him! Think of all the scientific implications!"

"Twilight, darling. When I hear the fact that a mature, possibly *carnivorous*, and obviously *dangerous* dragon with *legendary powers* is staying in my hometown, 'scientific implications' is the *last* thing that come to mind!" Rarity stated quite flatly. "Frankly, I'm more concern with the gems in my shop; if this brute gets any hoarding ideas, I'll...!"

"Rarity, the one time we ever got involved with a dragon's hoard, *you* were the one trying to steal *its* gems!" Twilight growled dangerously. Rarity's tense look quickly turned into one of embarassment, the fashion designer laughing weakly and nervously.

"Well, if any dragon has to come to PonyVille, I'd rather have this 'Spyro' than any of the others, being nice for a dragon and all." Rainbow Dash admitted. She suddenly perked up. "I wonder how fast a flyer he is!"

"I'm just glad I'll finally have another guy to be friends with." Spike stated. "I need a change from just a bunch of girls! No offense."

"None taken." The cyan pegasus grumbled.

Spike chuckled a bit before he turned to Twilight, his laughter fading when he saw the unicorn staring at him, tears in her eyes. "Twilight? Are you oka-?"

Twilight quickly scooped up her number one assistant in a bone-crushing hug, tightly squeezing her baby dragon close as the tears began running down her cheeks. Spike's eyes looked as if they were going to pop out of his skull; even with a dragon's super-strong skeletal structure, he could swear he heard and felt his ribcage caving in against her death grip.
"Twilight...can't...breathe!" He wheezed.

Twilight quickly released Spike, giving him a chance to gasp in much needed oxygen. "Sorry, Spike. It's just..." She sighed sadly. "...when we were watching you play with Spyro and his friends, I thought you would be happier staying here instead of PonyVille. I thought I was going to lose my number one assistant."

"Aw, come on, girls; you know me better than that." Spike said in a sheepish manner. "You girl are my true family; it's great to be with other dragons, but I couldn't leave you guys even if I wanted too. PonyVille is my true home."

Twilight smiled warmly, pulling the baby dragon in for another, more gentle hug.

The sound of flapping wings announced the arrival of their newest friend and guest, the three ponies and one baby dragon looking up to see Spyro approaching from above, carrying what appeared to be dragon-sized saddlebags around his shoulders. The purple dragon seemed a little downcasted, but nonetheless eager to venture into this new world of wonder and adventure.

"Hey, Spyro! Ready to go to PonyVille?" Spike asked eagerly.

Spyro nodded, hopping up into the chariot with the others. "We'll leave at your word, Twilight." He said calmly.

Twilight nodded, turning toward the guards and tapping on the chariot top; that was enough of a message for them and they took off, running across the ground before they and their chariot lifted off the ground and into the sky, beginning the trip to PonyVille. The roars and flying dragons could be seen even as the mountain itself shrunk behind them, reminding them all of the crazy adventure they just had.

Spyro suddenly heard the sound of someone scribbling something on a piece of paper; he turned toward the sound to see Spike sitting near Twilight, using a red feather quill to write something in a scroll, reading his writings aloud as he did so.

"Dear Princess Celestia, seeing the Great Dragon Migration made me wonder what it meant to be a dragon, but now I realize that who I am is not the same as what I am." He said as he wrote. "I made a great friend amongst the dragons, and I had a great time learning about my fellow dragons, but my new friend and my old ones helped me see that not even all that could ever replace my real home in PonyVille. I may have been born a dragon, but Equestria and my pony

friends had taught me how to be kind, loyal, and true. I'm proud to call PonyVille my home, and to have my pony friends as my family..."

The feather suddenly glowed purple as Twilight levitated the quill and scroll from a surprised Spike and brought it in front of her, smiling reassuringly to Spike as she began writing her own lesson.

"And I, Twilight Sparkle, have come to learn that not everything is set in stone or can be seen in black and white." Twilight said aloud with her writing. "If we just look at the other side of a story, we can learn to look at the grey and decide if someone who is suppose to be an enemy is truly what he appears to be based on their choices and heart. It's good to be cautious and realize that some books can be judged by their cover, but it's equally good to be open-minded..."

She then looked to Spyro with a friendly smile. "...And with just a little bit of faith, trust, and kindness, sometimes those that are supposed to be the greatest of enemies can become the best of friends. Yours Truly, Twilight Sparkle and Spike."

Spyro smiled himself, finding wisdom in his new friend's words.

The adventures had begun.

Hey, everybody! Tyraka628 here! I'd just put up this author's note to get a few things cleared up for future chapters of this new story series of mine.

First off, there is *not* going to be a Love Triangle story between Spyro, Cynder, and Twilight. In my version of the Spyro francise, Spyro and Cynder are brother and sister, not mates. This was how I viewed Spyro and Cynder in the Legend of Spyro series during all the non-romance parts. Now don't get me wrong, I am a solid-core Spyro/Cynder Pairing Fan and always will be...but it makes sense if you think about it: from what we learn in A New Beginning, Cynder was a purple dragon herself before corrupted by Malefor (Yes, she was! Her egg was purple in the flashback in A New Beginning; I've seen it myself), and purple dragons are very rare and only once every ten generations thing; it's very likely in the game itself that Spyro and Cynder both came from the same parents to begin with.

Secondly, the first many chapters of my story will be remakes of many of the episodes from the series; I know that there are only three episodes between Dragon Quest and A Canterlot Wedding (Damn Chronology!), but the show itself doesn't give any *true* order of which event came first. Besides, there are a lot of episodes I've wanted to write in this adventure crossover of mine! :]

Lastly: This message to answer a few things about my version of Spyro written to me from a guest named 'Fwelin'. First off, I'd like to say thanks for all the compliments about

my story; I try to keep it on a professional level, and often go back to fix said grammar mistakes.

The Spyro I'm using is my very own version; a 'dinosaur-ish' mix of all three versions of the previous Spyro games, though mostly like the Legend of Spyro series. If you read my Profile Page and the first author notes, you'll see how I made my very own version of Spyro and the other Spyro Characters instead of picking ones from the first three game series. The background story is also my own version; I'm not trying to change a version of another. I made Cynder Spyro's sister based on 1: my personal view of the games, 2: relationships and events in prequel stories I'll be writing soon, and 3: and to keep away that Love Triangle situation involving Spyro, Cynder, and Twilight (Twilight Sparkle will be Spyro's romance partner in my stories).

My version of Spyro was made to be less like a small, human-minded dragon and more like the big, ferocious, animalistic dragons you see in fairytales and movies; he is a dragon, after all, and in my my stories he will be ferocious and fiery like true dragons. 8 feet tall and 20 feet long is the average size of a teenage Prehistorian Dragon (roughly the third growing size of Spike in Secret of My Excess Episode), while 16 to 20 feet in height and 45 to 50 feet in length is the average adult size. Dragons live for thousands of years, but mature relatively fast, so 200 is about 13 to 17 years in Dragon Standards.

Spyro's 'pride (he wasn't being prideful; he was merely telling Twilight the facts)' is actually part of his more matured hero nature, while his temper is part of his savage draconic nature, as well as a result of his dark past. Besides, my version has traits from all three versions of Spyro, including the bold, boasting, adventurous traits from the first Spyro.

Despite his size, he is still shorter than Princess Celestia, who can fit easily in the buildings of PonyVille and Canterlot; if she can fit in there, then so can Spyro. He usually only has trouble fitting through smaller doors. Besides, the PonyVille Library and other buildings in Equestria are larger than they look; the library alone can hold over fifty ponies during Pinkie Pie's parties, remember?

I'm glad that you shared your thoughts, though. I'll see what I can do to improve the original quality of the characters while keeping my own feel to it. Perhaps this will help explain a few things to other readers as well.

Until Next Time, Tyraka628

3. Welcome to Equestria

CHAPTER II: WELCOME TO EQUESTRIA

Canterlot, Next Morning:

The great city of Canterlot was truly majestic, regal enough to fit the Princesses and the elite that it housed. The towers climbed high enough to touch the sky, connected by lengthy bridges and walkways, built from the purest white marble, royal colors of purple and sparkling gold, capped with images of the sun and moon. Waterfalls, sparkling in the morning sun, cascaded down the cliffs below, falling to goodness knows where. High up and built against and within the side of a great mountain, it seemed like it could overlook the whole of Equestria from its tallest tower.

And in one of these towers were the guest suites; They each contained a large magnificent bed, a vanity mirror, and some other furniture for the needs needs of the guests...and it was in these where Twilight, Spike, Rainbow Dash, Rarity, and Spyro were all staying in.

Twilight, Spyro, and the others had arrived in Canterlot around midnight, and Princess Celestia was kind enough to offer them suites in the castle for them to spend the night in. Twilight and her friends instantly passed out into blissful slumber the moments they snuggled down into their beds, finally able to laid their heads down in a familiar warm bed after such a incredible day, finally safe once more.

It was already eleven as Twilight awoke, yawning as she sat up in bed. She nearly jumped in surprise when she found herself in one of the princess's royal suites, but calmed down when she recalled the events of yesterday...but actually that just made it worse.

It wasn't that she didn't trust Spyro to behave; even in the brief time she had known him, she knew he was just like Spike: A dragon on the outside, but a pony on the inside. He was accepting of ponies, brave, and had a wise, matured head on his shoulders, a good dragon...but a dragon nonetheless...and not a cute, small, and harmless baby dragon like Spike, but a big, scary, and powerful teenage dragon. He may mean well, but not everypony was as trusting as she was; Rainbow Dash was proof of that. She could just picture their arrival to PonyVille: all it would take was one pony to scream at him and the whole town would erupted into full blown panic...that, or the infamous CMC would do something drastic that would set his draconic temper into full blaze.

And then Celestia would see she didn't know how to handle even one little assignment, bring her back to Canterlot to begin the studies all over again...meaning...it was back to...to...*MAGIC KINDERGARDEN*!

"NOOOOOOOOOO!" Twilight screamed to the heavens at the top of her lungs.

Her scream woke up Spike, along with probably the entire palace. "GAH!" The baby dragon cried in alarm as he jumped ten feet out of his little basket-bed, coming back to the floor with a crash. "Twilight? What's the big idea?" He groaned, rubbing his head in pain.

Twilight sighed tiredly, looking emotionally worn out. "Sorry, Spike. Just thinking..." She muttered.

Spike, however, knew Twilight better than that. "Please tell me this whole dragon magic thing isn't going to end up like the Smarty Pants incident." He asked, making Celestia's student blush in angry embarrassment.

"I told you never to mention that ever again..." Twilight growled, trying to quell her raging blush; surprising she did, slowly slipping out of bed as she did so, heading for the door.

"Where are you going?" Spike asked.

"To get some fresh air." Twilight murmured. "I need to think."

Canterlot Train Station:

"Come on, Twi. Spyro's a good dragon, just like me!" Spike said as they walked through the crowds leaving and entering the recently-arrived train from PonyVille. "Well...maybe not just like me." He admitted. "But he's a great guy. I'm sure all of PonyVille will like him once they get a chance to know him."

"That's just it, Spike." Twilight told them, head hung low in worry and sadness. "What if they *don't* give him a chance? I know Applejack, Pinkie Pie, and even Fluttershy will be his friends, and maybe a few other ponies as well, but all it'll take is just one pony to panic and it'll all be ruined. Either that, or the resident Horses of the Apocalypse will do something and blow the whole thing!"

"Now that you mention it, it'll probably be the latter." Spike said thoughtfully.

"You're *not* helping." Twilight stated flatly...before sighing in defeat. "This isn't just some minor magic exam I'm taking, Spike. Celestia says Spyro is the *most important and feared-for dragon in the world that dragons come from*. If I mess this up, I could very well start a pony/dragon war!"

"Come on, Twi; we've been through worse before, right?" Spike asked, trying to assure her. "Like the time you and the girls fought Nightmare Moon and Discord! A lot was at stake there, right? And you still won in the end!"

The lavender unicorn gave the baby dragon a grateful smile. "Thanks for the vote of confidence, Spike." She said truthfully yet quietly. "But I have a feeling things aren't going to be the same for a while..." She then said with a half-worried voice as they spotted Applejack, Fluttershy, and Pinkie Pie approaching them. Applejack's face said that she had a bone to pick with Twilight, Fluttershy's was of incredible concern and relief, while Pinkie Pie was just full of the normal, carefree happiness that she was famous for.

"Where the heck have ya been?!" Applejack snapped angrily once they reached her. "First ya, Spike, Rarity, and RD disappear from the face of the earth the other day, and now I've just been

dragged all the way here from my work for some 'import'nt manner'! Well, it better be import'nt; I'm fallin' behind on preparations for Applebuckin' Season!"

Twilight sighed. "Girls, pay attention." She said with every ounce of stern seriousness she could muster. "Something *really* big has just come up..."

Celestia's Castle:

Spike said that the castle was a huge, grand building of splendor and wonder, but the baby dragon never said just how huge it was on the inside. Walls climbed high to arch into the ceiling, pillars adorned many of the hallways Spyro causally passed through as he wandered the palace. Even the most bare of ways held tapestries and carpeting complete with murals and paintings. Celestia really lived like royalty; he would know, his home being the royal palace of the kingdom of Coastalis in the world of Starina; a kingdom on the edge of the sea.

Spyro was indeed awakened by Twilight's scream of mortal terror, causing the purple dragon to shoot out of bed in a fright. It took him a while to recall the events from before, having awakened in a unknown palace, but he did remember that he was now a resident of the world of Equestria.

He went to Twilight's suite to see what the commotion was about, but found it empty, with a note resting on the Twilight's bed:

Gone for a morning walk. Be back soon.

Twilight.

So Spyro decided to at least explore the palace and see what the lifestyle of these Ponies was like. He had been doing this for a half-hour already, and still there was so much to see! And he hadn't even left the palace yet.

He was already liking it here.

His thoughts were cut off when he rounded the corner and crashed into a pony coming his way; both dragon and pony gave cries of surprise as they fell backwards onto the floor. Spyro groaned a dragon's growl as he shook his head, ridding it of its dizziness as he looked up at the pony he crashed into, who was just getting up off the floor while rubbing her head.

She was another beautiful Royal Alicorn, like Celestia, but only half the Sun Princess' height and as different to her as day and night...literally. Her coat was a very dark blue, like the night sky, and her mane and tail appeared to be made of flowing light like Celestia's, a swirl of it covering her forehead, but it was a deep blue in color and sparkled with thousands of tiny dots of light...just like the night sky. Her entire flank was pitch black, with a few spots of color running down her legs and up her spine, the symbol of a cresent moon being the actual cutie mark. She

wore a pitch-black chestplate with the symbol matching the mark on her flank, along with a black tiara and sliver horseshoes on all four feet.

She opened her teal-blue eyes a crack to see who she had run into and, seeing the dragon before her, her eyes snapped open in shock and she quickly jumped back, taking a defense battle stance.

"WHAT TRICKERY IS THIS?!" She bellowed in a royal voice that shook the entire palace...and Spyro's poor eardrums, the dragon flattening his ears against his head in pain as he was nearly thrown back by the princess's voice. ***"HOW DOESTH THOU BEAST ENTER THY PALACE WITHOUT DETECTION FROM THY ROYAL GUARDS?!"***

Spyro groaned in pain, rubbing his left ear with his left claw. "Hello there, your highness. Look, I didn't sneak in." He tried to explain carefully. "Princess Celestia brought me here as a guest last night with Twilight Sparkle. I've been here since yesterday."

"HOW DARE THOU LIE TO ME, THOU MONSTROUS SERPENT!" The princess roared angrily, bringing another wave of pain to Spyro's ears and a flash of lightning across the clear cloudless skies. ***"I AM PRINCESS LUNA OF THE NIGHT, AND SISTER TO PRINCESS CELESTIA HERSELF! I WOULD KNOW IF THY SISTER WOULD BRING STRAY DRAGONS TO HER PALACE AT HER BIDDING, ESPECIALLY DURING THE NIGHT! HOW DARE THOU DISGRACE HER NAME WITH THY LYING TONGUE!"***

"It's not a Lie, I swear!" Spyro insisted frantically and slightly angrily, backing away from the spooky princess; he didn't scare easily, and he wasn't truly scared right now, but this...mare...was pretty close to making him feel fear for the first time in years, also making his dragon's fight-and-no-flight instincts kick in. "Your sister brought me here! Honest!"

"THOU SHALL PAY FOR YOUR DECEPTION AND THIS INTRUSION INTO OUR KINGDOM, DRAGON!" Luna shouted in rage, her horn blazing with her sky-blue magic. Spyro was suddenly engulfed in this magic field, yelping in suprise as he was lifted off the ground and suspended in the air. ***"NOW THOU SHALL CONFRONT THE WRATH OF THY SO-CALLED HOSTESS HERSELF FOR THIS ACT! THEN YOUR LIES SHALL BE BROUGHT TO LIGHT!"***

Spyro would've objected and used his own magic to break himself free and then attack her, but the fact that she was taking him to Princess Celestia stopped him. Every rage-filled dragon instinct within him told him to burst out of that magic bubble and tear the alicorn apart, but he forced them down. That was good; Celestia would help to clear this whole mess up. Besides, he wanted to see the look of this princess's face when she realized what she was doing. "Okay, okay. Take me to Princess Celestia; everything will be settled there." He said calmly.

"INDEED IT SHALL, REPTILE!" Luna stated angrily in her Royal Voice as she spread her own wings and took off through the halls, pulling Spyro along with her magic.

Spyro growled angrily as he grabbed at his ears with his claws. If only she would stop bellowing...

Celestia's Throne Room:

"So, lem'me get this straight. Ya'll sayin' that a big, teenage, and powerful drag'n or ancient legend will be stayin' in PonyVille with us?!" Applejack asked in shock as they all sat around in a group near Celestia's throne. "Where Twah'light will be teachin' it *how to use Magic*?!"

"That about sums it up." Rainbow Dash stated. Now all six mares and Spike were sitting at the base of Celestia's throne, where the Sun Princess was patient waiting for Spyro to arrive while listening to Twilight, Rarity, and Rainbow Dash were filling in Applejack, Fluttershy, and Pinkie Pie about their great adventure to Dragon Mountain and the purple dragon they had met and brought home.

Once she was done explaining, they all sat in bone-crushing silence as Twilight studied her friends' expressions.

Applejack had a concerned look of deep thought on her face, thinking hard about the recent and future events; she knew that Applejack would trust her, but was still concerned about the potential danger that would be living near her home and family. Rarity didn't seemed that concerned at the moment, but she did look thoughtful; Twilight knew Rarity trusted Spyro, as far as a pony could trust a dragon...but she was probably trying to cook up another hair-brained scheme to get herself a hooful of dragon jewels. She would have to keep an eye on her. Rainbow Dash had that stern glare of distrust on her face; it appeared that the fact Spyro saved her life didn't waver the pegasus's distrust for dragons at all. Twilight knew that Rainbow Dash would eventually warm up to him if he proved himself good, but was going to keep a sharp eye on him until then. Fluttershy was the worst out of all of them: her eyes and expression were full of terror, her body trembling slightly as she cowered to the ground. It was her Dracophobia kicking in again, just as it did during the Dragon Migration. Twilight knew that Fluttershy would love the dragon once she got to know him, just like she loved all her animals, but it was going to take a large nudge to get her to try. Spike had an excited look on his face, possibly thinking of all the fun and dragonish things he could do with Spyro now that he had another dragon to hang out with. Twilight just hoped burning down PonyVille and raiding the Canterlot Royal Treasury wasn't among those things.

Amongst all the thinking and looks, there was nothing but silence.

All-consuming... ominous... crushing... silence.

Which was promptly broken by Pinkie Pie.

"Ooh! I just remembered! I have to throw a Welcome-Mr.-Big-Scary-Powerful-Yet-Nice-Dragon-To-PonyVille party for him!" She squealed happily, bouncing around like a lunatic. Twilight promptly slammed her head against the stairs of Celestia's throne. "I have to get started on that right away! We're going to need balloons and cupcakes and streamers and more balloons and music and-"

"*PINKIE*!" Twilight screamed, causing them all to jump in surprise.

"Yes Twilight?" Pinkie asked with a grin.

"Did anything I just say impact you at *ALL*?"

The party pony stopping bouncing, blinked a few times. Then resumed grinning. "Nope!"

"UGH!" Twilight groaned, slamming her head against the throne steps again.

"Well, I'll go with it fer now." Applejack finally admitted, readjusting her hat. "If Twah'light says he's okay, then I trust her. I'll just be a little watchful of him just in case he decides to go all drag'n on us."

"Thanks, Applejack." Twilight said gratefully, lifting her face from the marble step.

"A-A-Are you s-s-sure h-h-he's n-nice?" Fluttershy whimpered, looking up from behind her hooves. "I-I-I m-mean, n-not t-that I-I d-don't t-trust y-you g-girls, b-but..."

"Don't worry, Fluttershy. Spyro's a nice dragon, even nicer than Spike." Twilight assured her, to which Spike folded his arms in annoyance. "We didn't think he was mean and ferocious at first, but not only did he keep our secret hidden, but he even saved our lives when we were discovered. How much nicer can you get?"

"I agree with Twilight." Rarity announced, brushing her mane in a lady-like manner with her hoof. "True, he was rather rude about my costume, but he was a true gentlestallion all the same."

Rainbow Dash scoffed. "Well, you have to admit: he *was* right about your costume. It really did suck." The cyan pegasus stated flatly, earning a death glare from Rarity. "And for a dragon he's not that bad, I guess...but I'm still not ready to trust him completely just yet." Rainbow Dash then said. "For all we know he could just be playing on our sympathy to sneak into PonyVille and then attack us all in our sleep! So I'm keeping a eye on him just in case!" Twilight rolled her eyes in annoyance; even for Rainbow Dash that was paranoid. "Not only that..." she continued, taking to the air. "...but Princess Celestia said she's already sent a few royal guards under cover in PonyVille just in case he does go all dragon, right Princess?"

Princess Celestia nodded, smiling warmly. "Indeed it is, but I'm trusting you all with this, My little ponies." She told them all in a motherly tone. "This dragon is very special, and you have the honor of making sure he becomes even more so. The worlds of Ponies and Dragons alike may depend on it in the future."

"You can count on us!" Rainbow Dash said with a hoof salute.

"There, you see?" Spike told a relieved Twilight. "With the Princess's royal guards and the Elements of Harmony watching over Spyro, nothing could possibly go wrong, right?"

SLAM!

"SISTER CELESTIA!"

"It's Nightmare Moon!" Pinkie Pie screamed as she bolted out an open window, the other ponies screaming in alarm as they whirled around toward the open doors and the angry Princess Luna standing in the doorway. Behind the princess was Spyro, suspended in the air by the Princess's magic, looking *pissed*.

"Oh *No*...!" Twilight groaned; she gave a deathly glare to Spike. "You just had to open your big mouth!" She hissed angrily, causing the baby dragon to grin sheepishly.

Luna didn't even bid Twilight and her friends hello, storming right up to her older and taller sister while pulling the dragon with her. Applejack's jaw dropped in surprise and even a bit of fear as she observed the *monstrous* dragon teen she was carrying. Fluttershy almost fainted on the spot in terror. Pinkie Pie, who had popped up out of nowhere, was watching him with an awed and surprised face. Celestia frowned slightly, wondering what on earth was going on.

The Moon Princess slammed the dragon in front the throne, earning an angry growl from the dragon. The deep, bone-chilling growl was all Fluttershy needed, the cream pegasus falling over on her back, stiff as a board with her legs up in the air.

"Sister, I found this dragon roaming the halls of the Palace Suites, wandering about as if he owned the place!" Luna told her sister, pointing an accusing hoof toward an angry Spyro, who was struggling to stand under her spell, with little success. "No doubt trying to find the Royal Treasury! He not only claimed to be a guest of ours, but he also said your student brought him here herself!"

"And that's the *truth*!" Spyro snarled angrily, glaring back at the princess with angry eyes...slowly charging his own power. "I'm not trespassing at all!"

"SILENCE, MONSTER!" Luna bellowed, forcing him back down and pinning him to the floor with her magic. ***"THOU SHALL SPEAK WHEN SPOKEN TOO!"***

"Luna..." Celestia said calmly and carefully, knowing there was already going to be an angry dragon to deal with. "Spyro *is* our guest."

"HE...!" Luna began, only to stop suddenly at her sister's words. Her angry face slowly faded into one of troubled confusion; the type of face a child gets when they suddenly realize they're in trouble. "...What...?" She asked weakly.

None one said or did anything, the entire room filled with an even greater silence. The Mare Six all stood there in deathly silence, staring stone-still in shock, their faces ridden with shock and brain-wrecking nervousness. Spyro glared at Luna with an calm but undeniable rage, promising the forces of hell once he broke out.

"Spyro has come to Canterlot under order of the Dragon Lord Volcanus to learn the Element of Magic from Twilight herself." The Sun Princess continued calmly. "He's the one *we've been waiting for,* Luna." She then said.

Twilight's eyes narrowed in confusion, her mentor's last words breaking her out of her stupor. What did *that* mean?

Whatever it meant, judging from the look on Luna's face, was something that the Princess of the Moon had just blown *big time*. She was currently staring through anything between her and the end of the universe, the look on her face almost comical should the situation fit it. Her mouth hung open and her lungs seemed to run on minimal power. A deep, soft, continuing growl was coming from Spyro as he impatiently tapped his claws on the floor; the only sounds currently in the room, echoing in the silence.

"Well, this is awkward." Spike stated, shattering the silence with an almost audible snap.

The silence was shattered permanently when, with an fierce glow of bright-purple energy, Spyro shattered Luna's magic field around him with a fiery-blue explosion. The Princess of the Night cried out in true alarm as her magic...the godly, unmatchable magic capable to moving the moon and stars themselves...was shattered by a powerful, other-worldly force, the field of sky-like magic bursting into blue flames and fading into thin air.

The next sound was the loud, animalistic roar of an angry dragon as Spyro burst forth from the flames, throwing himself as Luna with claws opened and teeth bared. Luna cried in alarm before using her magic to teleport out of the way; Spyro landed on the floor with an angry crash, his claws scratching with that painful-sounding 'shriek' as he skidded to a stop, growling an as he scanned the room for his victim. He caught her scent and whirled around aggressively toward Celestia's throne, where Luna was hiding behind her sister; the dragon growled as he approached in a predatory fashion, glaring at both princesses in animalistic fury.

"Not so fast!" Rainbow Dash snapped, leaping at the dragon. Applejack quickly caught the pegasus' rainbow tail with her mouth, holding her back as she pulled against the earth pony's strength.

Celestia, however, remained perfectly calm through all this as her own horn glowed with her golden magic; from a small table next to her throne she levitated a set of ivory-carved panpipes to her lips, closing her eyes as she blew on them.

The music that came from it was some of the most beautiful music Twilight and her friends had ever heard; it was so soothing, like running water or lapping waves, and Twilight felt the fear building in her fade into a calm, peaceful state of mind.

Apparently Spyro was experiencing the same effects; the twisted snarl on his face slowly but surely faded into a calmed, stern glare, his growl fading into no more than a deep thrum. It was as if this instrument was made specifically to soothe an angry dragon's temper. Spyro then

closed his eyes, exhaling deeply in a deep, pressure-releasing growl-like sound, twin streams of smoke shooting from his nostrils.

The music stopped once the song was over, the panpipes floating down from Celestia's lips. "Feel Better?" She asked.

"Yes...thanks..." Spyro sighed, still a little cross, but no longer full of fiery rage.

It was only then Luna poked herself out from behind her sister's wing, stepping forward her a apologetic face. "I apologize for my actions, dragon." She said in a humbled voice. "I was only acting out of best interest for the safety of my subjects...but even that doesn't excuse what I did."

Spyro sighed himself, lowering his gaze as well. "Apology accepted...because you're not the only one who overreacted." He muttered out of shame. "Just...don't use that royal voice next time it happens, okay?" He asked hopefully. "That really hurt."

Luna blushed sheepishly, an embarrassed grin coming to her face as she glanced at her sister, who merely smirked back.

Applejack finally released Rainbow Dash's tail, walking up to the dragon. "Now what the hay was *that* all about?!" She asked in a stern manner, her western accent completing the image of a redneck cowgirl in Spyro's mind. "I know drag'ns have a knack for fightin' and stuff, but *attackin' the princess*?!"

"Yeah! Are you really a guest or was I right about you being a *real* dragon!" Rainbow Dash asked aggressively, zooming up to Spyro's face.

Spyro responded by snorting a soft cloud of frosty mist in Rainbow Dash's face; the pegasus yelped in surprise as she fell backwards, rubbing frantically at her face, with was covered in frozen particles of ice.

"For one thing, I am a real dragon to begin with. Especially by that costume you, Twilight, and Rarity came in." Spyro stated flatly; Rarity glared at him, but didn't say anything. "And I didn't attack the princess; she attacked me. I was just exploring the palace and when I bumped into her, she assumed I was a 'dragon attacking the kingdom'. She's the fifth one this month."

"*That* bad, huh?" Applejack asked.

"Yeah..." Spyro stated; he studied the earth pony's entire appearance for a moment. "...Applejack, right?"

Applejack's eyes widened in surprise. "Yes, how'd ya know?" She asked.

"Spike told me about you all when I met him at dragon mountain, and it's not that hard to guess who's who..." Spyro stated, turning his gaze to the other ponies. "...and...I'm guessing you're Fluttershy..." He then said to the frightened pegasus. "...and you're Pinkie Pie."

Pinkie Pie gasped in pure amazement. "Yeah, I am! Wow, you're *good*! I would've never guess that in a hundred years and you guessed it right away how'd you guess it was me?" She squealed excitedly, riochecting about the room like a pink ping-pong ball.

"It wasn't hard to guess..." He muttered in slight disturbance. He looked down at Applejack. "Is she...?" He began.

Applejack chuckled. "Yeah, she's like this all the time. But don't worry, ya'll get used to her." She assured the stunned dragon.

"Oh..." Spyro said, staring out into space for a long time...before rubbing his temples with his wings. "What a morning; first day here and I'm already assulted by an army of talking ponies...so...what's next?" He asked.

Twilight giggled at his comment, as did Luna, Applejack and, of course, Pinkie Pie. "Well, the Pony Express doesn't arrive until this afternoon...how about we show you around Canterlot until then?" The purple unicorn offered. Spyro hummed in thought as he scratched his chin in thought; he then looked up to Celestia, obviously sending a silent message for her permission.

Surprisingly, Celestia nodded. "Yes, you may leave the castle, but you must stay with Twilight and her friends at all time. You may be our guest, but you may cause panic amongst the more...'cowardly' of my subjects." She stated, having trouble finding the right word to describe her subjects.

Rainbow Dash finished pawing the last of the ice particles from her face. "Don't worry, princess. I'll make sure he doesn't go anywhere without us..." She growled in Spyro's general direction; the dragon wasn't impressed nor intimidated by her display.

"We all will." Twilight said more cheerfully, heading for the doors of the throne room. "Come on girls! I mean...girls and two guys?"

Twilight and her friends spent the rest of the morning and day showing Spyro around the grand city of Canterlot, spending time with their new dragon friend while waiting for the train that would take them home to arrive; having lived here most of her life, Twilight was the tour guide of this little walk. With Spike riding on his usual place on her back, the purple unicorn took her friends to see all the important icons of Canterlot.

The first thing Spyro noticed about this world and, more accurately, its residents, was how colorful everything was; it was like someone had taken the contrast meter and turned it all the way up to a hundred. Everything was so bright, so colorful, that it literally hurt his eyes at first

and he had to take a second to get used to it. Have these ponies ever heard of gray or darkness? The ponies themselves were also colorful. Even the ponies that were a dark color still managed to make it seem even more bright. It was almost annoying. Every pony they passed gave Spyro frightful glances, quickly hurrying their way past them.

Right know they were just entering the WonderBolts' Derpy Stadium just after finishing lunch at Donut Joe's Dunkery, which Rainbow Dash seemed really excited about. The WonderBolts, as Spyro learned, were Equestria's Pegasi Aerobatic Flight Team, and Rainbow Dash's lifelong dream was to become a member one day. Spyro knew it wasn't going to be an easy dream to achieve, seeing that this was Canterlot's best flight team, but he admired and could relate to her determination in pursuing her dreams.

They arrived at their destination, which they could see from the balcony of the dining area they stood in. The Stadium was built on the side of the mountain to the side of Canterlot, the track was an oval-shaped ring of clouds set with red flags flapping in the breeze, with stands containing ponies watching it. Inside the course, a group of Pegasi in blue uniforms were tensed and ready to fly.

"Here we are, the Wonderbolts Racing Derby!" Twilight announced, the girls all standing on their hind legs with their front hooves on the balcony. "And it looks like a race is about to start."

"Awesome!" Rainbow Dash squealed, her eyes locked on her heroes. "Hmm...I'm gonna say that Fire Streak has this one."

"Really? I thought you'd bet on Fleetfoot." Fluttershy inquired softly...the first words Spyro had heard her say.

"I would, but she's not having the best year at the minute, so she won't be in form." Rainbow Dash stated wisely. "Fire Streak's the second fastest in the team, so he's bound to win this."

"Shoot, I'm gonna say Spitfire's gonna win this." Applejack decided.

"*Spitfire*?" Rainbow Dash scoffed. "Come on! I know she's the captain, but speed isn't really her thing."

"I know ya know yer stuff about 'em, but maybe this'll be her lucky day."

"It's not about luck. It's about speed and skill, which Fire Streak has more of."

"Well, I'm sticking ta it." Applejack replied stubbornly.

"Your loss." The cyan pegasus stated with a shrug as the announcer signaled the start of the race.

Spyro decided not to argue with Rainbow Dash about the Wonderbolts. He could tell by her fangirl-like admiration for them that she knew as much about them as he did about Monsters.

He just watched silently as the Pegasi soared a few laps around the track, the wind whipping through their manes. Soon, it was the red-streaked mane of Rainbow Dash's bet that zoomed across the finish line ahead of the others.

After Rainbow Dash was done giving Applejack the 'I told you so' attack, Twilight showed them around other areas of interest, giving them a little bit of history about the place; most of them they were required to stay outside, as they would need to pay to get in. She showed them the opera house, the art gallery, a few cafes that she frequented once upon a time, places that were of significance to either herself or to the city. Though most of the places were high standing and sophisticated, in other words rather boring, Spyro enjoyed spending times with these ponies, as well as learning about this new world he would be staying in; he may not be an egg-head like Twilight, but he learned it's good to get a strong knowledge of his present locations and of the things in it.

As Twilight led them into the main plaza, where they stopped at the fountain to catch their breaths and talk, Spyro turned his attention to Fluttershy; the cream pegasi was watching him silently as she timidly followed her friends. Her expression was a fearful one, still, but it looked as if she wanted to say or do something, but just couldn't build up the courage to do so.

"Is something on your mind?" He asked softly.

Fluttershy squeaked in embarrassment and fear as she hid her face behind her bangs, her cheeks bright red from being caught staring. "Oh, I-I'm sorry...I-I was just...thinking...Please d-don't be mad..." She whispered so softly it was barely audible; Spyro guessed it was thanks to his dragon's sense of hearing that he could hear her at all.

Spyro gave her a soft, understanding smile. "I'm sorry if I'm scaring you." He told her. "I get that reaction a lot from most creatures. I am a dragon, after all."

This seemed to make Fluttershy's fear fade, the pegagus looking up at him in pity. "Oh no, you're not...well, maybe a little..." She admitted shyly. "I-I didn't mean to hurt your feelings..."

Spyro shook his head, lowering it down to her level afterwards. "No, it's okay. I've gotten use to that kind of reaction by now. Besides, you don't seem like the type to be unafraid of anyone, right?" He asked, sounding like a brother comforting his little sister.

Fluttershy nodded shyly, her bangs falling in front of her face. "Y-Yes...well, short of. I didn't mean to be scared, b-but I'm...w-well..."

"Shy?" Spyro asked. She nodded in response. "I thought so; you know, my own sister used to be like that when she was younger."

"Really?" Fluttershy asked with awe, her voice still keeping that soft, gentleness about it. "I-I would've never guessed." She admitted. "I didn't know dragons could be shy."

"It happens." He stated.

Twilight looked interested. "And this sister of yours; was she that black dragoness with the red underbelly and sliver horns we saw?" She asked, taking a seat in front of Spyro.

Spyro nodded. "Yes. Her name is Cynder."

"Huh. I assumed she was your girlfriend or something." Rainbow Dash stated. "After all, you two don't look related."

"Well, she could be my mate in the future, once we're older."

All of them looked surprised and confused. "But ya just said she was yer sister." Applejack stated. "How could she-?"

"Mating between siblings isn't common, but it's not unheard off with dragons." Spyro explained before it got any more awkward. "There are two methods of reproduction between dragons: the animalistic mating season when females go into heat, in which the relationships usually only last for a few days, or the humanistic marriage with the one you truly love. Usually it isn't hard to find a mate, being the highest populated species of Prehistoria, but in certain locations like where I live, we dragons are very far-spread, making the likelihood of running into other dragons not related to you are rather slim. So unless you live in or near the Dragon City of Warfang, or are actually able to make the Dragon Migration, sometimes the only choice a male dragon has is to mate with his sister...unless you find a female member of a non-dragon race is willing to mate with you."

"Does that actually happen?" Fluttershy asked, innocently curious about dragons.

"Sometimes, usually when love is involved." Spyro told them. "Dragons have the most advanced breeding systems of any creature; we're able to successfully mate with and create offspring with any vertebrae race in the Fantasy Realm. You ponies could bear my eggs if you were willing, which would hatch into dragons."

All six mares took a step away from the dragon, staring at him uneasily, blushing like mad. The actual thought of doing...*that*, with a dragon, no less, was more than just a little disturbing. That, and the idea of laying an egg didn't sound very comfortable.

Rarity felt someone lean against her, and she looked down to see Spike leaning romantically against her, gazing up at her with cupped claws and lovesick eyes; the white unicorn looked even more uneasy.

Spyro rolled his eyes, annoyed by Spike's advances. "Anyway, Cynder and I are the only dragons living in our home area, so I may have little choice if I want to find a mate that's another dragon." He stated; he softened at the memories of him and his wonderful sister. "But I don't mind, and I don't think Cynder would either; We've...we've been through a *lot* together...and we've become really close because of it."

"Awwwww...that's so romantic!" Pinkie Pie swooned sweetly, cupping her hooves together.

"Pinkie! This drag'n's talkin' about marryin' his own *sister*, which is fine by me if that's how drag'ns do it, but you actually think a brother/sister marriage is *romantic*?!"

"Aren't those the marriages that result in foals being born with toed feet?" Rainbow Dash whispered in Fluttershy's ear, who merely nodded in return.

"Can we *please* change the subject from mating?!" Twilight asked desperately. "Let's talk about something else about dragons!"

"Okay, I have a question." Rainbow said, folding her fore-hooves as she hovered in the air. "What's with the whole 'destroying villages and kingdoms' that dragons do?"

Spyro looked thoughtful. "Well, think of this from a dragon's perspective." He told them. "If you all were dragons, would you fly around all day long and over hundreds of miles looking for tiny, filthy, diseased-ridden scraps of animals scattered throughout the wilderness, which you would have to chase, battle, or fight other dragons for...or would you go after a big, inviting, set-in-one-place All-You-Can-Eat-Buffet of fat, clean, slow, succulent farm animals?"

They all stayed silent for a moment. "Good point." Applejack finally said.

"Dragons attack villages and kingdoms, usually within our territories, usually for food, hoarding, power-displays, and sometimes for fun. It's also how we assure our reputations amongst our fellow dragons." Spyro continued to explain. "I haven't destroyed any pony villages since this is my first time here, and I don't plan to because your my friends, but I've destroyed many human *cities* in my time." He said in a proud manner.

All the ponies suddenly tensed at the word human. "Wait...you've encountered *humans* before?" Twilight asked in a frightened tone, frowning slighty.

Spyro frowned himself. "When I was just a hatchling, before they went extinct...I take your question means humans aren't common in this world." He growled darkly, glaring at nothing in particular. "Good. The less humans the better."

"Humans used to live in Equestria, but according to legends they were wiped out a *long* time ago by Windigos, and since then Celestia has put a spell over Equestria that keeps any from even entering our world from others." The lavender unicorn explained softly, still a little tense about the subject. "But even so, there's even a law that forbids contact with humans should we ever encounter any."

"Sounds to me like these Windigos did this world a favor..." Spyro spat bitterly, his voice rising in anger as he continued. "They were a bunch of naked, pathetic, homosexual, hairless, murdering apes that *had* advanced, if still relatively primitive, technology! Damned animals whose only worth was for us to *slaughter*, just like they slaughtered us dragons like dogs!"

"Woah, woah! Calm yerself down, partner." Applejack quickly objected, placing a hoof on his arm; her mere touch seemed to snap him out of a crazed blood-driven rage, even shaken a bit. "I'm pretty sure humans are nasty critters, bunch don't ya think that's a bit harsh?"

"Yeah, come on!" Rainbow Dash exclaimed in her usual careless-sounding fashion. "Sure, those big monkeys may be dangerous, but even *that* was low."

Spyro glared at the pegasus, snorting in disgust. "Easy to sing of friendship for all when you haven't experienced true darkness, isn't it?" He muttered darkly; he then turned away from the girls, heading over toward the balcony of Canterlot's edge. His body hung and pratically dragged itself over to the ledge before he sat down just behind the half-wall, looking over the landscape in silence. The view before him was one many people could only find in fairytales; a pure, beautiful landscape of color and possibly magical beauty. A world of peace.

Twilight, casting a brief glare at Rainbow Dash, came up and sat down next to Spyro, placing a gentle hoof on his shoulder. "Hey..." She began softly, earning his attention. "I'm sorry about that; Rainbow doesn't mean any harm, she's just saying what she believes."

Spyro stared down at Twilight for a long time before turning his gaze back to the horizon. "When I was just an egg, my world was at war; all the eggs laid that generation were hidden away and guarded in the Dragon Temple, including me, where we were protected by Ignitus and the other Guardians." He began softly, though loud enough for Twilight and the rest of the others to hear. "But we were found by the dark army; Ignitus saved my egg by rushing me out of the temple and sending me down the Sliver River, where I floated out to sea. From what I was told, I floated through an portal to the world of man, washing up on the shores near a small town. It was when I hatched did a spell placed on my egg by my father took effect, and I was transformed accordingly to merge with the locals of that world...humans."

It didn't take the smart lavender pony long to put two and two together. "Wait..." She began, her face contorting in horror.

A deep sigh escaped from his nostrils. "I...was a human...turned into one at birth."

All six ponies and one baby dragon gasped in shock and disbelief. "You were a *human*?!" Rarity exclaimed in disbelief and shock.

"B-But that's *impossible*..!" Fluttershy whimpered.

"What happened?" Twilight asked, frowning more in concern than disturbed fear. "If they were once your own race, then why do you hate them so much?"

"They were *never* my race!" Spyro snarled angrily, scaring the ponies once more. "I was a blind fool back then!" He then stopped, taking a deep breath to calm himself. "...I thought myself to be a human, and I was content with that life...but the spell was only meant to last until I was old enough to take care of myself by dragon standards. Once I turned thirteen, the spell broke, and right then and there I transformed into the dragon you see now; it was a *horrible*...*agonizing*

transformation, and once it was complete I was no longer seen as the friend I once was. I became a monster, and they stood by and watched as evil humans tried to enslave me for my power. *Everything* I had, everything I thought I knew and loved, suddenly turned on me as if everything we had been through didn't matter anymore! Do you girls have *any* idea what that's like?" He asked desperately, turning to them with eyes wet with tears. "To lose all hope? All faith?...all love?"

But they couldn't answer, because there was nothing they could compare.

"I thought so..." Spyro whispered softly, closing his eyes to keep the tears back...before glaring into the distance. "I became a monster in their eyes...so I returned the favor."

Spyro paused a moment to calm himself, taking slow, calm breaths. For some reason he wasn't crying; the last time he recalled the story of his mother's death and devastating betrayal, it left him sobbing for hours. That was when he told it to his new family; the ones that had saved his life...and, more importantly, his heart, healing it from all the bitterness and hatred, showing him love once more. He was glad he didn't die that day.

Maybe you can recover after all.

Twilight choked back on the lump in her throat, her heart wrenching with sorrow and pity while tears ran down the sides of her face; all the ponies were watching them with faces of sorrow themselves: Fluttershy looked close to bawling her tears out. Then, to Spyro's surprise, she leaned against his arm and hugged it tightly, like a child would hug the leg of her parent. "I'm...I'm so sorry..." She whimpered, her tears running from her face onto his scales. "...it's horrible...I'm *sorry*."

Spyro's surprised look slowly turned into one of grateful thought. "So, there's a pony who'll shed tears for us dragons..." He said calmly. "You don't have to apologize; what happened that day was not your fault."

"No, I do have something to be sorry for...we all do." Twilight insisted, still hugging tightly to his foreleg. "I'm sorry for judging you to be a monster the moment we met you...no one who's been through so much deserves to be judged as the ones who caused him his grief."

Applejack nodded, her own eyes wet with unshed tears. "And he can count on his true friends to see him through." She added, gently laying a hoof on Spyro's left arm.

Spyro smirked half-heartedly. "Shall that be another one of your Friendship Reports to the princess?" He asked playfully.

Twilight smiled softly. "Maybe later." She said in a gentle tone, giving his arm one last squeeze before she let him go, turning away from him. "Come on. The train should be here."

Spyro nodded before he noticed Fluttershy in front of him, her wings barely flapping as she hovered in front of his face. He studied the pegasus's face; it was full of pity and sorrow, her eyes glistening with unshed tears.

"Fluttershy, are you oka-?"

His question was cut off when Fluttershy suddenly hugged him, wrapping her hooves around his head in a gentle, almost motherly hug, softly nuzzling the side of his head. Spyro was surprised by this move, remaining motionless as the once-terrified pegasus held his head against her body as a mother would a child.

"What-?"

"I-It's okay..." She whimpered, tears running down her face. "You're safe now...you're safe..."

Spyro's surprised expression softened into a understanding one, staring up at Fluttershy with a grateful look. "Thanks..." He said softly, bringing his tail around and using the end to wrap Fluttershy in a hug. "...I know I am."

The Pony Express (a name Spyro found highly amusing) was, like the rest of the town, colorful. They were currently all in the passenger car, the girls and Spike all talking and laughing amongst themselves, while Spyro laid across a seat set a few seats in front of the girls, resting his head on the window sill as he watched the world zoom by, the hum and vibrations of the moving train having a soothing effect on him. The train car was completely empty besides them; none of the other passengers wanted to share a train car with a dragon.

The train chugged it's way through the mountains, the tracks set on the sides and curling down toward the flat plains below. He could see for miles from up here; as the train went down the normal side of the mountain, he could see a small, medieval-styled village in the plains near a jungle-like forest, and when the train faced the opposite side of the mountain from the village, he could see the ocean far off near the horizon, the sun just beginning to sink behind it.

The ocean. Always good. He missed that dearly already.

He felt a hoof tap his tail to get his attention; he turned to see Twilight sitting down on the seats in front of him. "Are you okay?" She asked. "You haven't spoken much since we left."

"I'm just thinking of the sea." He told her, turning his gaze to the distant ocean once more. "My new home is a palace built *right* on the edge of the ocean of Starina. Cynder and I wake up to the sound of the ocean waves every morning, swim in it every day, and fall sleep to the wave's sounds every night...that, and our mother's singing..." He sighed. "...I'm *really* going to miss her voice."

Twilight looked touched, but Rainbow Dash, who had come over with the other girls, scoffed. "Come on! You're a *teenage* dragon, and you're mom still sings you *lullabies* at night?!" She exclaimed. "*Ooooh*, that's *really* dragon-like!" She laughed afterwards.

"I think it's wonderful." Fluttershy said softly, a warm, shy smile adorning her face. "Was she a dragon too?"

"No. She's a mermaid."

The ponies and Spike all gasped in awe, muttering in wonder amongst themselves. Spyro looked confused.

"You've seen a real live mermaid?!" Twilight asked in complete awe. "What are they like?! Do they really have beautiful voices?!

"Not even *angels* possess a voice as beautiful as my mother's." Spyro told them in a warm tone, not at all offended by Rainbow Dash's remark. "You know, my father, the prince of the Kingdom of Coastalis, first fell in love with my mother because of her voice. He searched for the owner of that voice, vowing that he would marry her, and didn't stop until they were wed at sea...and that's how my sister was born; her true name is Melody, a human with raven hair and blue eyes; her name became Cynder when she was turned into a dragon by..."

He pausing, frowning slightly.

"By who?" Pinkie Pie asked.

"Never mind...we don't like to talk about him very much." Spyro muttered bitterly.

Rarity squealed in an almost fan-girl manner. "Now *that's* a true story of romance and love!" She swooned. "Oh, what I wouldn't give to have a relationship like that...instead of that whole *BlueBlood* incident!" She suddenly hissed with venom and disgust, her lovestruck gaze twisting into an angry scowl.

"Huh?" Spyro asked in confusion.

"Long story short: During the Grand Galloping Gala in Canterlot, Rarity tried to find her prince charming only to realize he wasn't charming at all." Twilight stated flatly.

The purple dragon snorted. "Well, that should've been expected." He stated flatly. "What's the whole story of this 'Grand Galloping Gala'?" He asked with a grin.

Twilight grinned herself; the rest of the trip was spent as her and the others telling Spyro their story of the 'Best Night Ever' during the Gala. Spyro couldn't help himself and burst out laughing at the parts of Rarity blowing up on BlueBlood, Rainbow Dash tearing down the entire ballroom trying to impress the WonderBolts, Pinkie Pie trying to make a fancy royal ball into a disco dancefloor, and werewolf Fluttershy causing a stampede of royal pets to create chaos. Luckily

laughter is contagious, and soon all of them were rolling about on the floor and chairs in laughter. Looking back, Twilight wondered if all the chaos caused that night was the real reason for releasing Discord.

Spyro gasped for air, wiping his eye with a claw. "Hah...heh...Oh man..." He wheezed, a big grin still adorning his snout. "You girls probably put my friends Neublar, Harry, Venom, Clark, and Stanley to shame!" He then paused, still grinning. "Actually...maybe not; they've made causing chaos in organized places and events an Art."

"Sounds like our Cutie Mark Crusaders." Applejack stated with a smirk, recalling all the chaos her little sister and her friends caused over the years...but nothing more was said as the train whistle suddenly blew overhead, announcing the train's arrival to PonyVille.

"Ooh, We're here! We're here!" Pinkie Pie squealed in excitement as the train slightly lurched as it slowed to a complete stop. Spyro followed the six mares out to the doors of the passenger car, keeping his head low to keep from hitting it against the ceiling and doorway, lifting it back up as he stuck it out of the doorway but stood in it, keeping himself partially hidden as he observed the village for himself. Most of the buildings were styled very similar to the houses of the village of Coastalis his father's palace was built next too. Their were several other interesting places: a life-sized gingerbread house which Spike called Sugar Cube Corner (Which definitely earned the attention of Spyro's stomach), a dress shop named Carousel Boutique (Spike seemed particularity keen on mentioning him this one), and the PonyVille Library...which was a tree.

He was about to step out of the car when Twilight stopped him. "Hold on...how are we going to do this?" She asked.

"Do what?" Rarity asked.

"Get him through PonyVille without causing a panic." The purple unicorn told them, glancing about for any people nearby; fortunately the Train Station was empty, most ponies already retired to bed for the night. "Nopony knows he's coming as a guest, and we don't want him causing a town-wide stampede of panicking ponies."

Spike scratched his head in confusion. "That reminds me..." He suddenly brought up. "What are we going to feed him during his stay here?"

Twilight could've slapped herself for not thinking of that sooner; how and what in Equestria were they going feed him?! He was a teenage dragon, already grown past the stage of eating gems and moving on to eating meat, which wasn't exactly easy to come by in PonyVille...and he certainly couldn't eat plants like they could! There was the fish that Fluttershy could feed him with, but he was huge! He probably ate more food than they all had in their homes combined! There was always feeding him Rarity's gems, but she wondered how he and the fashion designer would feel about it. Oh, she was getting a headache just thinking about it.

"What about gems?" Applejack asked thoughtfully.

Spyro frowned as he stepped completely out of the car. "Well, dragons *can* still eat gems once they matured..." He said in a uneasy tone. "...but being in human form during my childhood has made me miss out on anytime I should've been eating gems. I'm not sure if I can."

"Gems are great! I eat 'em all the time!" Spike stated happily, rubbing his stomach in delicious thought.

"Besides, I don't have enough gems to spare from my collection." Rarity said regrettably. "I *would* spare some, but I have important orders coming this time of year, so I really can't. I'm terribly sorry, though."

"I understand." Twilight groaned, rubbing her temples with her hooves.

"How about some of the fish I feed my meat-eating woodland friends with?" Fluttershy offered hopefully.

"Thanks for the offer, Fluttershy, but do you have enough to feed an growing dragon and your friends each day of his stay here?" Twilight asked, a small glimmer of hope appearing on her face...

...which faded once Fluttershy shook her head in regret. "No..." She admitted softly. "I'm really sorry."

"That's okay, Fluttershy."

"How about the treats at Sugar Cube Corner!" Pinkie Pie offered, bouncing about happily. "There's plenty to eat there! Stuff like cakes, pies, cupcakes, chocolate bars, cookies, cupcakes, gingerbread, lollipops, cupcakes-!"

"Sorry Pinkie, but no." Twilight stated. "I don't think even dragons could stand all that sugar without getting sick."

"Awwww..." Pinkie Pie moaned sadly, her bouncing coming to an end.

Spyro looked thoughtful. "Do you ponies have any domesticated animals that I could eat? Like farm animals or something?" He asked.

Applejack glared at him. "*Absolutely not*!" She insisted. "No drag'ns eatin' my livestock!"

"But-!" Twilight began.

"No Way, Twah'!" The orange farm-pony said sternly. "The Apple Family needs those animals for milk, eggs, wool, and stuff. Besides, some of those critters are dear to me since I was a filly!"

Rainbow Dash frowned. "Hold on...what about the pigs in your barn?" She asked; Applejack was about to give Rainbow Dash a piece of her mind when the Pegasus continued. "Come to think of it, why do we even have pigs?" The others looked confused. "Think about it: we ponies

have farm animals not to eat but to get stuff we need from them. Cows make milk, Chickens lay eggs, and Sheep give wool...but...what do the *Pigs* give us if we don't eat meat like ham or bacon."

All the ponies stared expectantly at Applejack, who only kept a torn look on her face. It was obvious that she cared for her livestock, but all evidence and need were on the contrary. She was now wondering that question herself.

Spyro finally shook his head. "No, girls, no." He said sternly. "These animals belong to Applejack; if she cares that much about them, then I won't harm them." He then turned his gaze to the jungle/forest he had seen coming down in the train. "What about that forest over there? Is there any game to hunt in it? I could hunt for my own food in that."

Twilight, Rainbow Dash, and Rarity looked surprised, but were confident he could defend himself. Applejack, Fluttershy, and Pinkie Pie however looked horrified. "But, Spyro! That's the *Everfree Forest*! It's too dangerous fer *anypony* to go in there!" Applejack said in horror.

"Ah, but I'm not a pony, am I?" Spyro asked.

Applejack stomped her hoof. "Darn stupid stallions. Stop tryin' to be brave!" She shouted at Spyro. "Aren't you concerned at all for yah own safety? Everfree ain't natural!"

"*I don't have a choice*! Unless *you* want to become a sacrificial meal!" Spyro yelled angrily in her face, his voice bordering a dragon's roar. Applejack recoiled as though his snarl had kicked her square in the chest and knocked the breath right out of her. "I don't want to kill you ponies or your animals if you care about them, but I'm a *dragon*! A *carnivore*! I *have* to eat meat, not just because I don't like the taste of plants! When I turned dragon that was one of the first thing that effected my human mind before I decided it was for the better: the fact that I had to kill and eat the flesh of other living creatures to keep myself alive. It still haunts me to this day, whenever my mother, father, or sister stumble upon me devouring the carcass of an animal I had killed to survive on! That looked of horror and disgust has always shamed me, but at least I have the choice to *choose* who and what to spare when I can...which include all of you right now."

None one said anything, watching the dragon and earth pony stare each other down. Spyro had an angry yet hurt look adorning his features, while Applejack's face and eyes were full of guilt.

"I'll hunt in the EverFree for my own food." Spyro told her, lifting his head back up and stepping away. "So I don't have to hunt my friends."

That was it for the guilt-stricken earth pony, who lowered her gaze in shame, her eyes even becoming wet with tears. What was with this dragon and moving speeches?

"Fine..." She finally muttered. "...ya can have the pigs if you want 'em."

Spyro frowned. "You don't have to do that." He told her.

"No. I want to do it." Applejack said with weak confidence. "Ya've made your point: ya have ta eat meat...and I don't want to git a friend on mine killed trying to find something to eat when I could give him food we really don't need ourselves. Ya can eat the pigs; just don't kill and eat 'em in Sweet Apple Acres."

Spyro sighed, shaking his head 'no' in shame. "Twilight..." He said, earning the unexpected attention of the unicorn. "Is there some sort of spell that can change me into a pony?"

"Huh?" Twilight asked.

"Can you use your magic to transform me into a pony like yourselves?" He repeated. "It would solve both problems of transporting and feeding me; I could finally eat plants and walk amongst ponies without scaring them. I have the ability to transform back to my human one should the need arise, but is there any way I could combine that with your magic to turn me into a pony?"

The others could almost hear the shiny, complex gears turning in Twilight's head. "Gee, I don't know." She admitted. "I guess it *would* be theoretically possible...if we used the same method as the appearance-shifting spell, but give it a mental command follow...and take the pony's DNA structure to a magical level...and maybe...*just maybe*...we could pull it off."

"Then *why* didn't you bring this up before this whole argument started?!" Rainbow Dash exasperated. "Let's give it a shot before anymore of this emotional stuff happens!

"It's dangerous to just go untested experimenting with magic!" Twilight snapped. "Especially when combining it with forces of the other worlds! I could mess up and wind up turning Spyro into a mutated freak or something!"

"I can always use my own power to correct myself should something happen. I've done that part before with other such incidents." Spyro assured her, lowering his gaze to hers. "Just give me a form of a pony, and I'll handle the rest."

"You *really* want to risk this?" Twilight asked in concern.

"It *does* sound dangerous..." Fluttershy said worryingly.

"I have to try...for *your* sakes." Spyro told them all, taking a few steps back from Twilight. "Let's try."

Twilight swallowed nervously in response, but nodded her head all the same. "Alright then...girls, give us some space." She told the others. Applejack, Rarity, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash and Spike all quickly stepped backwards a few feet, already looking worried. Twilight wasn't even sure what she was doing; she was using a spell that her idol StarSwirl the Bearded used to change his appearance to disguise himself, but she was going to force it even further by completely transforming a dragon into a pony. She was going to have help from Spyro, who would contribute his own shapeshifting abilities (another power of the purple dragon she guessed) to 'soften up the clay before molding', if you will.

This was extremely risky, but she could understand and appreciate the reason Spyro was doing this. Very noble of him...

She closed her eyes and focused her magic, her horn glowing brightly as she channeled powerful magic into it, preparing to fire it as a beam as Spyro readied himself, his eyes glowing purple as he took a defense stance, bracing himself.

All the ponies watching had different feelings toward this: Fluttershy was horrified, afraid that her dragon friend was going to be harmed through this. Applejack was both worried and guilty, knowing the main reason he was doing to this was for her sake. Rarity watched on with the over-dramatic flair, covering her eyes with her hooves and peeking out from in between them. Rainbow Dash was nibbling on her hooves, the tense moment making the usually cool and calm pegasus sweat like no tomorrow. Pinkie Pie...was eating popcorn as she watched eagerly for some cool magic trick to happen. Spike was wringing his tail nervously, worried that the dragon he could consider a brother could be hurt.

Then, Twilight fired the beam. Just before it struck, Spyro's body burst into a blaze of dark-purple, heatless flame of his transformation power, the ponies watching crying out in alarm, almost disturbing Twilight's concentration. The energy from Twilight's magic was absorbed into the fire, turning the dark purple fire into a mix of Spyro's dark-purple fire and Twilight's magenta-purple. The two magics swirled and danced together, merging and twisting around the molding and shifting figure inside as Twilight continued feeding the fire with a constant stream of magic. Sweat rained down her forehead like rainwater, her face tightened into a straining growl as she groaned in exhaustion, forcing herself to control the magic, to keep it up...almost there...almost...

The swirl of fire and magic exploded, creating a powerful blast of purple light that momentarily blinded the other ponies, who cried out in pain and fear. Twilight screamed as the magic back-lashed, throwing her physically backwards against the side of the station wall. But fortunately the explosion lasted only for a few seconds, the blast and glare fading into the air around them, leaving all the horns of PonyVille's unicorns vibrating from the excess magic.

Once the light receded, Spike and the other mares rushed to Twilight's side, the baby dragon helping his groaning master sit up. "Ugh...d-did it work?" Twilight asked weakly, rubbing her head with her hooves.

They all looked at Spyro, who was lying on the station floor in exhaustion...causing all the mares to stare in shock and awe.

"Twah'light...it *worked*." Applejack finally managed to say.

Spyro just laid there as he tried to catch his breath. When his sense of touch returned his suddenly realized how...different...his body felt. Did it work? He lifted his right foreleg upwards to his vision. Instead of a scaly dragon's claw and arm, he now had the strong foreleg of a pony, which was covered in dark-purple fur and ending with a sharp, golden hoof. the same colors of his previous scales and claws.

"Well...did it work?" Spyro asked, looking up at Twilight and the others...who suddenly seemed bigger to him. Still shorter than he would be standing up, but now bigger in comparison.

Rainbow Dash gawked. "Wow...you're *hot*!" She exclaimed.

"*Rainbow*!" Rarity scolded, slightly blushing.

"What? He is." Rainbow Dash stated nonchalantly.

Spyro grinned, then paused in curiosity; he ran his tongue over his teeth, now feeling the flat, herbivorous teeth of a pony instead of the sharp, dagger-like fangs of a dragon. He turned to Spike.

"Well? How do I look?" Spyro asked.

Spike, shaking slightly in disbelief, fumbled around in his traveler's bag until he found a large, handled mirror. He held it up in front of Spyro, tilting it so Spyro could fully see his new body.

Spyro was now a strong, bold, noble-looking, yet draconic pony about the same size as Princess Luna, a head taller than Twilight; to Twilight, Spyro even resembled the Princess of the Night in form and facial appearance: though he had the stronger, more muscular build of a male, his body was still lean and built for speed, and his face was like that of the princess's face more than it was a male's. Instead of a horn, he had two stag-like antlers adorning the sides of his head that resembled his dragon horns. His wings were now feathered, like a bird's, dark-plum in color, but they were huge: they weren't like the small, folded up wings like most winged ponies, but more like a griffin's, the long, large feathers trailing beyond his hips. His shorter but still long and flexible tail was saurian in style, like a dragon's, and his messy, semi-long mane was pitch-black in color, partially draping over his eyes, but it didn't stop growing at his neck: it continued down his neck, shoulders, back, and to the end of his draconic tail in a large blazing tuff of hair. His hooves were doubled, like a deer's or goat's. He also still had his golden chest and underbelly scales, along having such scales covering the top of his snout and forehead. His fur was a dark royal-purple in color, the same as his scales, and his hooves were gold as well. Adorning both of his flanks was the dragon's symbol for the Element of Convexity. Finally, his bright-purple eyes weren't like a pony's either: the pupils were stilll shaped like a dragon's, and the whites of his eyes were also off, being a paler shade of bright-purple instead of pure white. To Twilight, those eyes bore a slightly spooky resemblance to the eyes of Nightmare Moon.

"I can't believe it actually worked!" Twilight squealed in surprise and delight, bouncing around Spyro in an almost Pinkie Pie manner. "I've just invented an entirely new spell! Not even StarSwirl the Bearded could pull off full-body shape shifting!"

"Don't let it get to your head." Spyro stated sternly. "One: you merely guided my transforming spell into becoming a pony version of myself instead of a human, merging your magic with magic that's not suppose to exist in this world, so it was mostly my doing." He then flapped his new wings and swished his tail around. "Two: the spell wasn't completely successful; a few dragon traits still exist in this form, such as my eyes, horn, wings, and tail."

"No...it's not that." Twilight whispered, now staring at the dragon-turned pony with awed eyes. "You're a...a...Kirin Pony! Oh my gosh!" She squealed. "A real live Kirin Pony! They're an ancient race of presumably extinct Pony/Dragon hybrids that lived in the far-east of Equestria! I can't believe I'm seeing a Kirin for real!"

"Well, at least it's good enough to get by." Rarity offered. "You can now walk amongst other ponies without causing world-wide panic."

"And you can eat pony foods, like Cupcakes!" Pinkie Pie chirped happily.

"What is it with you and Cupcakes?" Spyro groaned in frustration. Much to his chagrin, Pinkie responded by singing some random song about Cupcakes, to which he stuffed a hoof into her mouth before she could get past the first verse. "I like my mother's and sister's singing voices, but yours is even worse than your speaking voice! Do! *Not*! Sing! In! My! Presence! Kapeesh?"

"Mph, mph fph mmmphh!" Pinkie 'mmmphed' from behind Spyro's hoof. Spyro removed his hoof from Pinkie's mouth; he felt a hoof tap against his shoulder, and he turned to face Applejack.

"Thanks, partner." The earth pony said gratefully. "That was mighty big of ya, riskin' yerself for yer friends. I owe ya one."

Spyro chuckled. "This is Spyro the Dragon you're talking too. Risking my life is a daily occupation." He joked.

Fluttershy still looked concerned. "But...can you change back?" She asked. "I don't think the other dragons want you to be stuck like this forever."

"Well, let's test it." The purple kirin stated, and with that he closed his eyes and focused on his ability to transform. His 'ability' to transform wasn't exactly a power he possessed, but more of a trick he learned in manipulating magic; when the spell that kept him human was broken, tiny fragments of the spell's magic remained inside him, but far too weak to do anything. He learned through accident how to focus his dragon power on these fragments, charging them to the point where they reactivated and turn him human again, and then to stop using his power and cancel the spell, reassuming his true form once more.

This time, as Spyro focused, he felt two different kinds of magic fragments inside him: some were the glowing-blue aura of his human spell, and the new ones were the new purple magic energy, identical to Twilight's magic. Currently his power was focused into charging the purple magic, to the point his entire body was consumed by it.

He stopped the flow of purple dragon magic, and immediately his body was engulfed in purple flames once more; once they cleared and the feeling of his body returned, he stood tall once more as the purple dragon he was.

He flexed his clawed fingers, getting used to the feeling of having them. "Having hooves is weird." He stated. "I can't believe you ponies can do this kind of stuff without them, minus the unicorns of course."

Twilight giggled. "Well, you'll have to get used to it." She told him. "You'll have to stay like that when in public places until I can speak to the mayor and secure the fact you're not a threat in PonyVille. Now turn back before somepony-"

"CUTIE MARK CRUSADERS DRAGON CAPTURERS! YAY!"

"Buh?!" Was all Spyro could say before he was tackled by three little blurs of color that flew in out of nowhere, causing all six girls to scream. He discovered the blurs to be three little fillies, only half the size of Twilight and her friends and probably younger than ten. One was a yellow earth pony, with red hair, orange eyes, and a large, pink-red bow in said hair. Another was an orange pegasus, with bright purple hair, matching eyes, and tiny wings. The last was a white unicorn, with pink/lavender hair, green eyes, and a small horn poking out of her forehead. Spyro also noticed that the three of them didn't have those strange markings on their flanks, but they were apparently very strong and fast for their size.

The little pegasus grabbed him around the neck, causing the dragon to squawk in surprise, while the white one landed on his back, yanking on his wings. The last one, the one with the bow in her mane grabbed his leg, causing him to trip forward and land on the wooden floor with a crash.

"I got em, I got em! Quick, find somethin' to tie him down with!" The earth pony shouted as she held onto Spyro's leg, keeping him from getting back up.

"I can't! I have him by his neck; he won't stop squirming around!" The pegasus exclaimed, pulling on Spyro's neck to keep his head down as the dragon struggled to break free.

"Well don't look at me! I have his wings so he doesn't try to fly off on us!" The unicorn squealed, holding Spyro's wings together so he couldn't fly.

"Applebloom/Sweetie Belle/Scootaloo! Get/Git off of him now!" Twilight, Applejack and Rarity shouted in unison, saying the fillies' respective names. Rainbow Dash and Pinkie Pie were rolling about on the floor, laughing so hard their sides hurt. Fluttershy watched with a shy yet amused smile.

All three tumbled off and huddled up, allowing Spyro to stand again. "But Sis! He's a *drag'n*!" Applebloom exclaimed. "He's here ta eat all the ponies in PonyVille! We gotta stop him!"

"No, he's not, and no, we don't!" Applejack scolded sternly. "Spyro's stayin' in PonyVille with Twah'light!"

"*What*?!" The fillies stammered, looking at each other in shock and confusion.

The earth pony mare approached the three. "Look, Princess Celestia made a deal with the drag'n king to have Twah'light teach Spyro here how to use magic, so he'll be stayin' with us for a few months."

"But-"

"I know he looks ferocious, but he's a really good drag'n, and even if he wasn't, you three should know better than tryin' to rassle up a full-grown drag'n anyway!" Applejack continued, glaring at her sister and friends with a glare that could kill if looks could. "Now, git your little flanks to yer beds and don't even think attemptin' to bother him again...I'll know. And don't go tellin' anypony about him neither! We're tryin' to keep him undercover fer now."

The three fillies groaned, but obeyed as they sulked away, all casting one last look at the dragon as he was dusting himself off. Once they were gone, Spyro sighed heavily and shook his head.

"You okay, Spyro?" Twilight asked.

"I'm fine." He stated. "Who in Tartarus were those three?"

Rarity sighed. "They, I'm afraid, are the Cutie Mark Crusaders, our resident walking disaster zones." She told him. "My sister Sweetie Belle, Applejack's sister Applebloom, and Rainbow's biggest fan Scootaloo. Those three mean well, being on a 'quest' to find their cutie marks, but you wouldn't *believe* the trouble they've caused."

Rainbow Dash snickered while casting a grin. "Some dragon you are, getting jumped by *fillies*! Don't see how you're a 'legendary dragon of super powerful elements'; I've seen thunder clouds with more bite then you!" She cackled.

"Back up that statement in a battle against me then, Tattoo Butt." Spyro stated with a devilish smirk.

"*EXCUSE* ME?!" Rainbow Dash screamed in anger, her face bright red. "IT'S NOT A TATTOO! IT'S MY CUTIE MARK! AND IT'S ON MY *FLANK*, NOT MY BUTT!"

Spyro quickly sealed his lips shut to keep from guffawing, snickering snorts escaping his nostrils as he tried hard not to burst out into laughter. "*'Cutie Mark'*? *Really*?" He managed to squeak before bursting out into laughter, falling backwards on the floor with a crash, pointing at the ponies while laughing hard. "You've gotta be kidding! 'Cutie Mark'! *HAHAHAHAHAHAHA*!" He laughed, collapsing with another crash again. "Oh yeah, that's *real manly*! What do they even do, anyway?!" He managed to ask.

"Nothing really." Twilight stated with a frown, insulted, as were the others. "Cutie Marks..." That sent Spyro into another laughing fit, and eventually got Spike laughing too. "...symbolize a pony's special talent. Whenever a pony discovers what his or her special talent is, their Cutie Mark appears on their flank."

Spyro wheezed as he tried to stop laughing, taking deep breaths with a huge grin as the ponies glared at him and Spike. "Okay...okay...I can respect the symbol of a pony's abilities." He said, still grinned. "But you ponies *gotta* consider a name-change or *something*! That just *kills* me!"

"It won't be the only thing..." Rainbow Dash growled under her breath.

"Let's just get going before this anymore out of control." Twilight stated, stepping down the stairs of the station, a small smile of amusement adorning her face. "It's getting late, anyway." She spoke true, Luna's moon and stars already visible in the dusk of night.

"Yeah, I'd better hit the hay myself." AppleJack stated, stifling a yawn. "Got apples to buck tomorra and everythin'. Besides, I'd better go or Applebloom's gonna be up all night."

"For once we agree on something." Rarity commented. "I'd better be heading home too and make sure Sweetie Belle's asleep as well. I had a wonderful time in Canterlot, though."

"Thanks for the day, girls." Spyro said as they began to leave. "It was a lot of fun."

"You're welcome, Mr. Purple Dragon!" Pinkie Pie said merrily as she bounced down the steps. "See you tomorrow! Unless I'm too busy helping the Cakes, then I'll see you again the day after tomorrow! But then I might be too busy throwing a party at SugarCube Corner, so I'll see you the day after the day after tomorrow! Unless..."

Rainbow Dash shoved a hoof into her mouth, stopping the party pony's never-ending list. "We get it, Pinkie." She said in annoyance. "I'll be seeing ya tomorrow, Spyro; I'd like to see what your wings are made off! Race ya tomorrow!" And with that the cyan pegasus took off into the night

Fluttershy paused at the steps, looking back to Spyro. "Well, good night, I guess..." She muttered, looking as if she wanted to say more, before flying off at a much slower and softer pace than Rainbow Dash had. That left only Twilight, Spike and Spyro standing alone in the train station. There was a moment of slience before Twilight spoke up again.

"Come on, boys. Let's get home and fix Spyro up a place to sleep." Twilight told them, leading the way toward the Library.

Spyro took a second to study the tree library in interest. It had been built into the body of a large tree, showing the pony talent to blend archUtecure with nature. With a little bit of magic, of course. Three balconies emerged from different parts of the tree, one of which had a telescope set atop it, pointed skyward. They approached the red door, which had a candle painted on it, and Twilight used her magic to push the door open.

Nopony around, as far as he could see. All of the essential sections were here: science, magic, history, Little Ponies, Fantasy, everything that a good library needed. His eyes swept over the

many coloured volumes, large and small, thick and thin. The Royal Library of Warfang made this one look like a book-wagon, but this was a pleasant place; very homey and comfortable-feeling.

"I nice library you've got here." Spyro stated. "Very warm and homey."

Twilight smiled in gratitude. "Thanks. I'll have Spike prepare a guest bed upstairs. Can you do that, Spike?" She asked her number one assistant.

"Sure." Spike stated, heading upstairs.

"Well, let's get some sleep, shall we?" She offered. "We'll be sleeping in since it's the weekend, but I'd like to get started on our magic training in the morning."

Spyro nodded. "Very well. Lead the way." He stated, following the purple unicorn up the stairs.

As promised, Spike had prepared a guest bed for the dragon, made down near the middle of Twilight's personal quarters; Spyro climbed into bed and pulled the blue, star-decorated blanket over him as he watch Twilight ascend the second set of stairs up to where her bed was on the next level. He sighed, watching the unicorn's mane and horn shine against the moonlight coming through the window.

A Unicorn.

Unicorn...many in this world probably didn't know how miraculous her existence really was, taking her kind for granted due to their large numbers. He knew of many children of the human world that longed their whole lives, even far beyond their childhood, to see a glimpse of a true unicorn...the creature who's very presence could reignite the dead hopes and dreams of even the most doubtful of hearts.

Twilight climbed into bed and was about to lay down when she noticed him staring. "W-What are you looking at?" She asked, feeling slightly awkward.

"I was only thinking." Spyro said calmly. "When I was a human boy, I've always been told that stuff like unicorns, dragons, mermaids, and magic were all just fairytales; stuff you would only find in fantasy books...and to think that I was one of those creatures all along and soon to be living with the others on that list and soon will be learning magic itself."

Twilight smiled. "I can imagine how wonderous that would be, wouldn't it?" She stated as she slipped under the covers, still staring at him with amused eyes. "To learn the impossible and the beautiful really do exist."

The dragon nodded. "Yeah. You can find it anywhere if you just look for it..." He said...before his smile faded. "...I just wish I learned that sooner, before I made myself a monster I didn't need to be."

Twilight's smile became a sad gaze of pity. "Don't worry about that anymore." She told him. "It's over now."

Spyro gave a small, grateful smile. I guess that's all I can ask for." He said, laying his head down on his pillow and closing his eyes. "Good night, Twilight."

"Good night...Spyro..." Twilight said softly, before laying down in bed herself...but instead of falling asleep, all she could do was stare at the ceiling, thinking about what Spyro had said for a long time...but soon, sleep found her at last.

4. Draconic Troubles

CHAPTER III: DRACONIC TROUBLES

It was a beautiful day in PonyVille. The sun was shining, the sky was clear, and all of PonyVille was out and about enjoying the beautiful weather.

Suddenly a dark shadow overfell the village, and out of nowhere a monstrous, enormous adult dragon flew in, landing in front of the Main Hall, where everyone was gathered for no real reason whatsoever. It was basically a Spyro version of the dragon Twilight and her friends had convinced to leave the mountain to keep his smoke from covering Equestria, complete with purple scales, golden horns and tail blade, red wings, and angry eyes.

"YOU PONIES HAVE DENIED ME A MATING EXPERIENCE!" The Dragon roared angrily, pointing an accusing claw at the ponies beneath him. "MY SO CALLED MATE TURNED OUT TO BE A BUNCH OF PONIES IN A DRAGON COSTUME!

Dragon Mountain revealed the collapsed pile of the dragon costume, with Rarity in the back groaning in both pain and pleasure.

"THIS DISGRACEFUL ACT ENRAGES ME! I DEMAND A SACRIFICE!"

"You heard the dragon!" The mayor yelled. "Who is the oldest and fairest virgin?"

Several dozen hoofs pointed at Twilight. The unicorn was stiff in shock, yet she could swear she heard Spike wailing "Rarity! NOOOOO!" somewhere.

"Sorry, Twilight. Need of the many and all!" The mayor announced and clapped her hoofs. Several strong stallions grabbed the student of friendship and dragged her to a post with shackles that had appeared out of nowhere. Just like the innocent yet revealing white dress she was suddenly wearing.

Twilight was shackled to the post as the dragon closed in on her, hunger and evil in his eyes. "Help!" the shackled pony yelled. "Help! I don't want to be eaten!"

"NOBODY CAN HELP YOU NOW!" The dragon growled evilly.

"I can!"

"WHO DARES?"

"Princess Celestia!" Twilight cheered as a well known form dropped out of the sky in front of her.

"I shall rescue you, my most faithful and attractive student!" the princess announced, wearing heavy, golden armor and shin guards. Her tiara was replaced with a heavy crown-helmet combination. "Prepare to taste my MIND BULLETS!"

Celestia's horn lit up with magic, and small rainbow spheres shot from it and hit the dragon. The monster dramatically grabbed its chest. "OH NO, I AM UNDONE!"

It fell over, landing right next to Twilight and Celestia with a crash, who freed her student.

"Now, let us see who this dragon truly *is!" the Goddess of the Sun and Princess of Equestria announced boldly. The head of the monster glowed in telepathic magic and was pulled off!*

"The Great and Powerful Trixie!" the whole place said in unison.

"It was her plan to dress up as the dragon and capture you, my smart and sexy student!" Celestia explained. "Then she would force you to work as her stage hand, manager and sensual massage mare."

"And the Great and Powerful Trixie would have gotten away with it too, if it wasn't for you meddling ponies and your dumb owl!"

"Hoo!"

"Now that you are safe, my well organized and flexible Twilight, why don't we go somewhere private and you help me out of this armor?" Celestia asked, nuzzling her student gently.

Synthesizer music started to play.

"GGAAAAAAAAHHH!" Spyro screamed as he bolted awake, jumping a good ten feet in the air before crashing down onto the floor. That, was by far, the *most disturbing dream he had ever had*! Thank the Ancestors he woke up before it got too awkward! But what the heck brought it on? Who the hell was 'the Great and Powerful Trixie'?! What was with Princess Celestia being a knight in shining armor?! And what was that about an Owl?!

He felt a slight tingling in his horns. He looked up to see them glowing with magic...well, not really glowing; they were slightly radiating with tiny bits of magic that were flowing through the air, so tiny and weak they were almost invisible. He guessed it was thanks to his dragon eyes that he could see them at all...and see that they were forming out a path.

He followed the trail through the air to the head of Twilight's bed; the lavender unicorn rolled over on her pillow and giggled lightly, revealing to Spyro that her own horn was barely glowing with magic, the little waves of excess magic becoming those strands that were drawn too and absorbed into his own horns.

'Is that *what happened?'* Spyro asked mentally. *'Did I see Twilight's dream?'* It made sense, seeing that the unicorn was apparently dreaming about something; the excess magical energy she was subconsciously generating must've been absorbed into his own horns, channeling into his mind and causing him to see her dream for himself. Oh, well that kinda made sense...

Wait...*THAT'S* what she dreams about?

"Oui...these ponies get *crazier by the minute*!" He groaned to himself, rubbing his temples with his claws. "I just hope it doesn't rub off!"

He heard a soft cough, and looked up once more to see Twilight waking up, her mane all frizzled and messy, her eyes blinking tiredly as she rubbed her face with a hoof. "Ugh, not another one of *those* dreams..." She murmured to herself, shaking her head to get the sleepiness out of it. "...I just *had* to wake up after doing *that*, didn't I?" She groaned in frustration.

"I'd say..." Spyro muttered under his breath.

Twilight heard the muttering and looked down from her bed. "Good morning, Spyro. Did you sleep well?" She asked cheerfully.

"Enough to feel rested." He stated; he then cocked a grin at her. "Bed-mane much?"

She giggled, giving him a playful glare. "Oh please. I get enough of that from Spike." She told him, rolling out of bed and landing on her hooves, which made the traditional 'clop' with each step. She made her way to a mirrored desk, where she levitated a hairbrush to comb her hair back to it's usual look.

"So, what's the plan?" Spyro asked, sliding out of bed himself.

"Well, first off is to wake up Spike and get him to make breakfast." Twilight answered, still brushing her hair. "Then I'm going to speak with the Mayor to get the whole 'there's a powerful but friendly dragon living in PonyVille' thing cleared up." She then trotted over to Spike's bed...well, sort off. Spike didn't really have a bed of his own, per-say. What he did have was a makeshift sleeping area made of a basket, a pillow, and several blankets. Kind of degrading in Spyro's opinion, but to each his own.

The unicorn promptly woke up her baby dragon by using her magic to lift the basket, turning it upside-down and dumping the baby dragon out of it. "GAH!" Spike cried as he crashed to the floor. "Twilight! What's the big deal?!"

"You've had plenty of sleep already." Twilight stated flatly. "Would you make some breakfast for us?"

"Sure." Spike yawned, sliding out of bed. "What do you want, Spyro?" He asked, eager to please his idol.

Spyro smirked at the cross look of rejection on Twilight's face. "Since bacon and others meat are not optional, I'll take an omlette, if you don't mind that is." He told him.

"Sure thing!" Spike said cheerfully, heading for the door.

"AHEM!" Twilight 'coughed', which shook the library's foundations.

Spike cringed, grinning sheepishly at the angry unicorn. "Oh, yeah...and...want to do *you* want, Twilight?"

"Pancakes. Extra Syrup!" She snapped crossly. "And brew some coffee! Extra cream!" She nearly shouted. Spike gulped before bolting downstairs with the sound of a bullet ricocheting of a metallic surface.

"Do you make Spike do all that stuff all the time?" Spyro asked with a slight frown.

"Not *all* the time." Twilight reassured him. "He's my number-one assistant, so it's always been his job to assist me with my work and studies. Don't worry; he's perfectly happy with this job..." She then turned suspicious. "...but I think he's secretly plotting to ditch me and get a job at being *Rarity's* assistant." She whispered to him.

Spyro rolled his eyes. "What is that boy's deal with Rarity, anyway?" He asked as they both headed downstairs, Twilight leading the way; the dragon ducked once more to slide carefully through the small doorway.

"I have no idea." Twilight groaned, shaking her head in annoyance. "Ever since we first moved to PonyVille Spike's been trying to earn Rarity's affections. He thinks that his crush on her is secret, but come on! *Everyone* in PonyVille knows he has a crush on her."

The purple dragon looked thoughtful. "I dunno...maybe it *could* work." He stated.

"You *can't* be serious." Twilight stated, quite frankly. "How on earth would that work?! I mean, come *on*; a *Pony* and a *Dragon*?"

"I've seen weirder, *Believe* me." Spyro strained, before turning serious. "Does Rarity feel the same way?" He then asked.

"I don't think so."

"Hmmmmm...well, you've gotta admire his persistence and determination."

"True enough." Twilight giggled as they entered the kitchen, the smell of eggs and pancakes reaching their noses, as well as the strong scent of coffee. Spike was standing on a stool in front of the stove, a chef's hat adorning his head and a spatula in his right hand, using his left to hold the pan over the element. Spyro noted that both the stove, and the coffee machine sitting on the nearby counter, were rather hi-tech for a seemingly medieval age world, equivalent to twenty-first century human technology.

He sat himself down at the round table across from Twilight and to the left of Spike's chair; Spike then carried two plates over to Twilight and Spike, one with a stack of three to four relatively large pancakes on top, and a dragon-sized plate (about the size of a punch bowl) with a equally dragon-sized omlette on top, setting the dishes to each of the diners.

"Sheesh, Spike!" Twilight exclaimed, staring wide-eyed at Spyro's monster omlette, which the purple dragon was staring hungrily at. "What did you use? Pterodactyl Eggs?"

"No, just all two dozen eggs in the fridge." He stated, setting a bowl and spoon at his own chair. "We need a new batch."

"Spike! That was suppose to last for the *month*!" Twilight shrieked. She glared at Spyro, who merely grinned. "From now own, your eating in pony form!"

After that, breakfast was surprisingly peaceful. Twilight used her magic to levitate and pour the syrup on her pancakes, using her magic also to operate the knife and fork, downing her coffee every now and then. Spyro merely leaned forward and ate like a true dragon, his paws being too big to wield kitchen utensils, which Twilight wisely ignored. Spike got the milk and poured himself a bowlful of 'Crystal Crunchies', a cereal in a red box with a cartoonish dragon on it, the cereal itself being made from a rainbow of crystal shards, using a spoon to eat it with.

Once breakfast was done and everypony's stomach full, Twilight used her magic to load the dishes into the dishwasher and flipped it on, the rest of them leaving the kitchen and heading to the lobby.

"That's pretty advanced technology for a race that live in straw-roofed cottages and tree-carved houses." Spyro stated, glancing back as they left the kitchen. "I assumed your day and age would be relatively primitive."

"It's sort of half-and-half." Twilight explained as she sat down on one of the cushions in the lobby, motioning for Spyro to do the same. "We ponies do have relatively advanced technology, but not very much of it; since we have magic to do most of our needs for us, we really don't need a bunch of high-tech toys littering the place, causing wars, and messing up the environment. Don't want to wind up like the humans, now do we?"

"Sounds a bit hippie-ish to me, but agreed none the less." Spyro stated, laying down on his cushion, making himself comfortable. "So, what are we doing now?"

Twilight grinned. "Something many ponies of knowledge have been wanting to do for years!" She said excitedly, her horn glowing. Without warning, a mountain of stack paper fell from the sky, making both Spyro and Spike shout in alarm.

"Writing a Dragonology!"

Spyro groaned. This was going to be a *long* talk. "What do you want to know?" He asked, folding his claws in front of him.

Twilight used her magic to levitate her quill and the first piece of parchment, and then she cleared her throat. She looked very giddy, as though it were her Birthday and Christmas at the same time.

"*Absolutely everything*."

That caused Spyro to do a double-take. "Wait, what?"

"You heard me." She said, getting all giddy. "I want to know everything about you dragons! Your cultures, traditions, lifestyles, all of it!"

The dragon looked uncomfortable. "Well...I'm afraid you'll have to narrow it down a little bit." He admitted.

Twilight nodded. "Very well. Let's start off with the most obvious one." She began, getting her quill and paper ready. "How is it that you can wield magic? It's basic knowledge that's dragons can't use magic."

Spyro shook his head. "Dragons today don't wield magic, but back in the ancient days of Prehistoria, during the time of your Princess Celestia's birth, there lived an ancient race of Magic-Elemental Dragons called the Magic Crafters." He told her, she beginning to write down notes. "Legends say that they were the ones that created the forces of magic in Prehistoria, but they died out a long time ago."

"What do you mean when you say 'elemental'?" Twilight asked. "Is that like our Elements of Harmony?"

"No, not like your elements. In my world dragons have what are called the Elements of Nature or Elements of Destruction, which grant us the elemental powers that we breathe." Spyro continued as she wrote down his words. "In this world, all dragons are Fire-Element Dragons, proven by the fact they breathe Fire." He glanced at Spike. "In my world, we have Fire Dragons too, but there are also dragons who breathe and control the elements of Ice, Electricity, Earth, and Wind. These are the five main elements; there are others, but those are more uncommon."

"Fascinating!" Twilight murmured in excitement. Once she finished writing all that down, she asked her next question. "Now, what's this legend about the purple dragon such as yourself?"

"Well, most Dragons can only use a single element: each dragon is born with the power to breathe and control one element, but only that one and no other." Spyro told her, telling her the secret and yet legend of the purple dragon. "But every ten generations, a special dragon is born that can use and wield all of the dragon elements, including elements not of the main five...including the long lost element of Magic. The legendary Purple Dragon."

Twilight's quill snapped as she had pushed it too hard in surprise of his sentence, looking up at Spyro in shock and surprise. "You're a breed of super special, ultra powerful dragon?" She asked in alarm.

Spyro nodded. "Why else would the Guardians and Dragon Lords make such a fuss over me?" He asked.

Spike looked intrigued. "Wait...I'm purple! Maybe I'm a rare legendary purple dragon too!" He announced proudly.

Spyro chuckled. "Sorry, tough guy. That only happens with Prehistorian Dragons." He told him. "Equestrian Dragons all always fire-element dragons, regardless of color or origin. Besides, you're lavender-purple, not true-purple."

"Awwww..." Spike muttered in disappointment.

Twilight summoned another quill, looking deep in thought. "Well, if what you did on the mountain is anything to judge by..." She muttered.

"You mean when I defeat those bullies in those contests? Now that was fun." Spyro chuckled with pride.

The lavender unicorn gave him a reproachful look. "Was it *really* necessary to resort to violence and competition?" She asked in annoyance.

"That's what dragons do." Spyro stated flatly. "We dragons and all other saurian monsters are naturally fierce warriors; it's in our nature. All of the mindsets of no fear, taking chances, and fighting back are all the instincts of a dragon; we don't fear anything we can crush or roast, and we won't hesitate taking risks, which included risking myself in an experimental spell that could've gone astray and messed everything up. All just the natural lifestyle of your normal dragon: powerful and unpredictable, always fighting amongst ourselves. When ponies raise a baby dragon as their own, which I hear is not uncommon, they use a spell to erase all those instincts and replace them with the instincts of a pony, or in the case of my home world, a peaceful human...if there actually *was* such a thing. That's why Spike doesn't know how to be a dragon."

"Just how much of this power does a purple dragon like yourself have?" Twilight then asked.

"Ignitus said the potential of a purple dragon's power is *limitless*, but I haven't reach that much yet." He admitted. "The elements I have mastered are Fire, Ice, Electricity, Earth, and Wind. I'm still training with Water and Magic."

"Amazing! I never knew dragons could wield such power!" Twilight squealed like a fangirl, bouncing giddily in her seat. "I'd *love* to run some field tests using your elements!"

"Maybe later, when PonyVille is expecting it."

The next hour or so was spent answering question after question, most of which were about dragons. Everything from dragon culture and traditions, to dragon language, to even dragon history. Spyro answered everything as best he could, knowing a lot about his own kind ever since he first met Ignitus and the other Guardians. He, in return, asked a few questions of his own, and was taken aback by some of the answers.

The one that surprised him most was the fact that ponies grew their own plants and controlled their own weather; all this, including the rising and setting of the sun, were all natural occurances in most worlds, including Prehistoria...but not that surprising at all when compared to Starina. Spyro was one of the few fortunate mortals who knew that Fairies tended to the World of Fantasy, including a very special fairy he was friends with.

By the end of a full hours, Twilight had FINALLY run out of questions (and paper). Spike was snoring away on a nearby pillow, while Spyro was close to dozing off himself. Twilight, however, was squealing with delight as she finished writing the title to her makeshift book, bouncing around the room once more with a chorus of happy 'Yesyesyesyesyesyes'.

"THIS IS *WONDERFUL*! Just *look* at *all* the new information we've discovered!" Twilight cheered as she levitated up a 50-page packet of notes she had collected, setting them on the desk. "Princess Celestia will be *thrilled*! This Dragonology has been deemed a success! *Finally*, after *thousands of years* of ignorance, Ponies will *finally* truly know about dragons!"

"Glad I could be of help." Spyro stated.

"*I could kiss you!*"

"Errrr..."

Their moment of awkwardness was shattered by a trio of blood-curling screams from the door; Spike jolted awake with a yelp, while Twilight and Spyro whirled around to see a trio of earth pony mares standing at the now-open library door, staring at Spyro with comically terrified faces. One was sharp lavender pink with a curly, bright green mane and tail, her cutie mark being a duo of daisies overlapping each other. The second was creamy yellow/white with a messy, rose-red mane and tail with paler red stripes running through them, her cutie mark being a single red rose. The third was a dark, dull pink with a golden, well kept mane and tail, her cutie mark being a trio of white lilies, one such lily being tucked in front of her left ear.

"Look, Roseluck! How awful!" The green haired one exclaimed.

"A giant ferocious dragon has broken into PonyVille's Library and is attacking Twilight!" The red-haired one, apparently Roseluck, said in mortal, if not humorous, terror.

"The Horror! The *Horror*!" The last one screamed. "EVERYPONY *RUN FOR YOUR LIVES*!"

And with that the three mares bolted outside as if fired from cannons, screaming as they went.

Spyro groaned, shaking his hanging head in annoyance. "And so it begins..."

Cutie Mark Crusaders' Club House:

Deeper in Sweet Apple Arces' more secluded area of the orchard stood the clubhouse fortress of Equestria's finest crusaders. Being a treehouse that Applejack used as a filly herself (though it had been rebuilt from the pile of cobweb-covered timber it started out as), it now served as the clubhouse for Applebloom, Sweetie Belle, and Scootaloo, who were currently whipping up their next plan in getting their cutie marks...and probably tear Equestria to the ground in the process...their recent plan involving a certain, purple-scaled visitor.

"Everyone understood the plan?" Scootaloo asked.

"Yah!" Applebloom cheered.

"Of course!" Sweetie Belle agreed.

"Good! First we sum up all the information we got, then make our way to the library, get ourselves some equipment and..."

"We know that already! If fact, we just talked about it, drew a picture and I even came up with a few lyrics for the song." Sweetie Belle interrupted.

"Yes, but we always do that." Scootaloo answered, looking offended. "Prepare the plan, draw a picture, you come up with the lyrics and then we loudly explain what we will do."

"But why?" The unicorn filly asked. "It doesn't make a lot of sense once you think about it. We could just go-"

"GIRLS!" Applebloom stressed, earning their attention. "We have more important things to do that question how we go about our crusading!"

"Yes! Now, what do we know about dragons? Before we set our plan in motion, which won't be talked about again." The filly pegasus asked. "Let's see...they can breathe fire!"

"They eat...everything that they like, I guess." Applebloom offered.

"And they work at libraries!" Sweetie Belle chirped.

"I don't think that that is a common dragon thing, Sweetie Belle." Scootaloo stated. All three fillies began to think in silence...until another idea popped into Sweetie Belle's head.

"Oh, I heard that they eat virgins! At least once a year!"

"What's a 'virgin'?" Applebloom asked.

"That thing in the sky! Next to that lion and the filly with the scales!" Sweetie assumed, still remembering her time as Cutie Mark Crusader Astrologer.

"So they eat stars too?" Scootaloo asked.

"Well, I saw Spike eat some gemstones... and Twah'light said somethin' about stars bein' like the sun, but far away." The earth pony explained.

"Ahhh, so baby dragons like Spike eats parts of a planet, while grown up dragons like Spyro eat other planets!" Scootaloo concluded.

"No *wonder* they get so big!" Sweetie Belle said in awe. "But...how are we suppose to get a star down here?" She then asked.

"Well, Princess Celestia is supposed to raise the sun with her horn! So we just need *you* to do it!" Scootaloo concluded, pointing at Sweetie Belle's horn.

"I don't think I can do that..." The unicorn admitted, glancing up at her horn in slight embarrassment.

"Maybe Big Macintosh knows something! He doesn't talk much, but he is really smart and likes watching the stars and stuff!" Applebloom suggested.

"Good idea!" Scootaloo agreed.

"CUTIE MARK CRUSADERS DRAGON EXPLORERS! YAY!" All three of them announced loudly in unison, grabbing their capes and rushing out of the club house to bring yet another disaster to PonyVille.

PonyVille:

Never had PonyVille seen such destruction since the great Parasprite Infestation a year or so ago. Ponies screaming, fires burning, entire buildings crashing to the ground in great explosions. The skies were black with smoke from the fires, the streets littered with debris and full of hundreds of panicking ponies, scattering about like a hive of ants that were under attack, screaming at the top of their lungs to escape the threat now in their village...

...who was currently sitting in front of the Library Door, having done absolutely nothing at all.

"Unbelievable." Twilight muttered, standing next to Spyro and watching the chaos before them; they looked up to see an entire flaming house fly over their heads, spinning all the way, before crashing somewhere beyond the other buildings, exploding as it touched down. "And here I thought *Discord* was bad..."

"Who?" Spyro asked.

"Tell you later." She told him, ducking as a familiar, cross-eyed pegasus flew over her head, crashing headfirst into the side of the Library.

"Twah'light! What in tarnation is goin' on here?!" Applejack asked as she, Pinkie Pie, and Rainbow Dash ran up to the two purple watchers, careful to avoid tripping on the craters now covering the ground. She frowned once she saw Spyro sitting out in the open in his normal dragon form. "Lemme guess...somepony saw ya, didn't they?"

"Alright, what did you do?!" Rainbow Dash snarled, zooming up to Spyro's face once more.

"I didn't do anything! That's the weird part about it!" Spyro objected in his defense. "What do you girls need *me* for? You guys cause a big enough ruckus to wake the dead!"

"EEK! THE DEAD ARE AWAKE!" Pinkie Pie screamed, the pink party pony zooming off, adding another pyscopath to the crowd. The others only stared after her.

"Twilight Sparkle! What is the meaning of all this?!" A new voice suddenly snapped. The group turned to see another, older-looking mare running toward them through the disaster. Her coat was a pale-dusty-brown in color, her mane and tail slightly jagged from age and grey in color...at least it looked grey; Spyro swore he could smell some sort of hair chemical or something. Perched on her nose were a pair of professional-looking spectacles and she wore an equally-professional ruffle/collar around her neck. Her cutie mark (Spyro still chuckled at the name) was that of a scroll tied with a long blue ribbon.

Twilight grinned sheepishly. "Oh, uh...hi, Madame Mayor. Uhhhh...Lovely weather we're having, huh?"

"PonyVille is tearing itself apart!" Madame Mayor exclaimed angrily. "What on earth could be causing such a horrible..." She trailed off once her gaze turned to Spyro; her worlds seem to catch in her throat as her eyes went wide with horror. "D...D-D-D...D-D-DR-DRA-!"

Twilight stuffed a hoof into the mayor's mouth, preventing her from screaming the word that caused this panic to begin with yet again. "Miss Mayor, we need to talk."

Main Hall, Mayor's Office:

Madame Mayor was an interesting mare. Ponyville was her first priority and she ruled it with a calm and soft hoof. Feats of loyalty towards the community got rewarded and she always had the right words to motivate the inhabitants. But right now, she seemed...different. Currently Twilight and Spyro were sitting across from the Mayor's desk in her office (or laying down in Spyro's case, the ceiling being too low for him to stand or sit up appropriately), and Twilight had just finished explaining to the mayor the whole ordeal with Spyro being a guest as was to be viewed and treated as such...and that possibly the Dragon King Volcanus would view this disrespectful mass hysteria as an offense.

Twilight knew that she did.

The Mayor was currently giving Twilight the patented 'hoofs together just below the lips and right over the edge of the glasses' stare. How Twilight envied ponies with glasses! They could do so many great things with them!

"Is there something you have forgotten to tell me?" The mayor asked calmly.

"*And* we have to keep Spyro's presence in PonyVille a secret from the rest of the cities in Equestria!" Twilight explained. "Order from the Princess!"

"Spyro is a *full-grown dragon with incredible power* as you have claimed, Twilight Sparkle. Hiding and housing him might prove a little more difficult than housing a baby dragon like your assistant." The brown mare stated quite frankly.

"It wouldn't be if *you ponies* didn't snap like the planet's about to explode or something by merely seeing me." Spyro told her just as flatly. "Look, I won't harm or threaten any of you during my stay; that's a promise...but if it's you ponies that freak out, then I can't and won't be held responsible for the damages and injuries caused. Fair enough?"

"It w-would be easier to t-tolerate your presence if you weren't so *intimidating*!" The mayor snapped back, though rather weakly; Twilight could easily see the unease in her over-all appearance, for obvious reasons.

"*Flattery* will get this conversation nowhere." The purple dragon snorted.

"Ahem!" Twilight cleared her throat loudly to get their attention. "As much as I find this conversation *amusing*, I think now would be a good time to mention Spyro's ability to transform." The purple unicorn stated, much to the Mayor's surprise and Spyro's frustration; he was hoping to avoid that subject to keep from having to transform into something so demoting.

"Thanks to my magic spellwork, Spyro can change his appearance into that of a pony's at his will. Would *that* be enough to satisfy you?" Twilight asked in slight annoyance.

The mayor didn't give much thought, glancing up nervously at the dragon towering over her. "Y-Yes, that would be very helpful. W-Would you consider that, M-Mr. Spyro?"

"Just Spyro will do." Spyro stated. He sighed deeply. "*Fine*...I stay in pony form whenever I'm in *public places*, though I won't guarantee I'll stay like that should things get hairy. Deal?" He offered rather sternly.

The mayor agreed; *anything* to get this dragon out of her office!

With another groaning sigh, Spyro closed his eyes and focused his power; Twilight and the Mayor watched in awe as the dragon's form was engulfed in a bright-purple light similar to Twilight's magic, concealing his body from view but the change of size and shape obvious. Within seconds the light faded completely, revealing the dragon-eyed kirin he became once more.

The mayor's jaw was hanging slack in disbelief, lowering her glasses to get a better look at the dragon-turned-kirin before her. "Oh my..." She murmured, blushing slightly; Spyro groaned to himself in annoyance...and slight amusement. "Uh, well...Do you have anything more...ummm...*Ahem*...*humble*?" She stammered.

"If you don't like it, I could always change back." Spyro stated.

"NONONONONO! This is fine." She quickly exclaimed fretfully.

Spyro nodded with approval. "Good. I guess that means we can go now?" He asked hopefully. "My entire bottom half has fallen asleep."

Twilight giggled. "Come on; the others are waiting outside." She told him. And with that, both purple ponies left the mayor's office, leaving said mayor with a migraine that would last until next week.

"So *there* you guys are." Rainbow Dash stated from her lounging place on a cloud suspended just above the doorway of the town hall, which Twilight and Spyro were just exiting from. Along with the cyan pegasus were the other four mares and Spike, all waiting outside for the meeting to be over...while the other ponies were busy cleaning up the mess they made.

"Can you believe this mess?!" Rarity exclaimed, using her own magic, which was light blue and *much* weaker than Twilight's, to levitate and throw away tiny bits of debris and trash in a nearby trash can. "Who would believe that just seeing Spyro would cause such a commotion?!"

"Apparently, we all do now." Twilight groaned. "As a result, Spyro has to stay in pony form whenever he's in public areas, except when in dire emergencies."

"Princess Celestia ain't gonna be happy when she finds out 'bout all this." Applejack stated flatly, watching as a dozen unicorns were using their magic to carry the large chunks of the flying house back to the buildings original location, an army of pegasi using their wings to clear the

smoke form the fires and using rain clouds to put out said fires. "First day in PonyVille and he already causes wide-spread panic."

Twilight just groaned.

"Hey! It wasn't *my* fault!" Spyro snapped in his defense. "Twilight and I were writing a Dragonology when these three ponies with flower marks suddenly come into the library and freak out when they see me; *they* were the ones who started this panic."

"You must mean Daisy, Lily, and Roseluck!" Pinkie Pie said cheerfully. "Those three are such silly fillies! One time, they-"

"Not now, Pinkie." Rainbow Dash stated flatly, still laying on the cloud just above them. She then chuckled. "Personally, I would've bet that the Cutie Mark Crusaders did this."

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "Really? Those three are *that* bad?" He asked.

Rarity rolled her eyes. "Oh, you would not *believe* half the things my sister and her friends get themselves into." Rarity told him. "One time they decided to try basket weaving; next thing I know, a *Demolition Ball* takes out half my Boutique!"

"And I have no idea how they got covered in tree sap." Fluttershy murmured quietly.

Spyro was already laughing at the very idea. "And all this just to get there own markings on the flanks?" He asked in disbelief. "And why would they want that? I consider them lucky, being the only ponies in town that aren't walking around with what appears to be tattoos on their hips."

"It's something all Ponies get eventually one they discover their special talent." Twilight told them crossly, recalling the steaming event of him laughing at their cutie marks. "A pony without a cutie mark is called a 'Blank Flank', and those three complain how some of the kids at school keep making fun of them because of it."

Rainbow Dash scoffed. "And I wouldn't talk about 'Hip Tattoos' anymore if I were you, buster. Look there." She told him, pointing to his flank and the symbol of Convexity now adorning it. Spyro just groaned.

Spike laughed. "If you think that's embarrassing, you should hear about the time Twilight encha-"

He was cut off when a magic aura surrounded his lips, transforming them into zippers and zipping his mouth up, curtiousy of a blushing Twilight. "Sooooo..." the unicorn began and Spike tried to upzip himself. "It looks like the construction of repairing the town's coming along nicely. I'd say we should get back to the library and-"

"APPLEJAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

The scream of pure horror could be heard throughout all of PonyVille, and since no one had heard a scream like it before, nopony at first knew who made it...but they recognized it soon enough.

"Wait...was that *Big Macintosh*?!" Rainbow Dash asked in shock.

"It can't be!" Applejack said in stumped disbelief. "Big Mac *never* screams! He doesn't even raise his voice!"

"Something must be horribly wrong then!" Fluttershy exclaimed softly as they all began running/flying to Sweet Apple Acres. "Oh! Uh! Wait for me!"

Sweet Apple Acres:

Big Mac was an earth pony. But both parts of the definition didn't do him justice. Years of working on a farm, ploughing, bucking apples and pulling carts made him much more solid looking that the average planet. Secondly, he was definitely a stallion in every sense of the word. Grown up, calm and mindful. He avoided talking too much, enjoyed the simple parts of life and had the practical kind wisdom.

Big Macintosh was a tall, broad, strong-looking earth pony with a messy, orange mane and matching tail, red fur, a cutie mark of a large green apple, and a large, wooden yolk around his neck.

Over the last year, he had seen a vengeful goddess of darkness returning from banishment, his sister leaving to fight a dragon, his home getting eaten by a swarm of...he still wasn't sure, and Caramel loosing the seeds for Winter Wrap Up.

None of this made him raise his voice.

Now, he was screaming at the top of his lungs.

"APPLEJAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"What the matter, Big Mac?" Applejack called as she and the others rushed to Sweet Apple Acres. By the time they had arrived, rushing up to the front of barn, the red earth stallion had collapsed onto his back, legs twitching in the air, eyes close to popping out of his skull and lungs running on minimum power...and standing across from him were the Cutie Mark Crusaders themselves.

"Sweetie Belle! What did you three do to him *this* time?!" Rarity demanded sternly.

"I don't know! All we did was ask him how to lure out virgins!" Sweetie Belle explained. Spyro fell backwards, laughing hard, while the six mares' faces lit up in a shocked blush.

"Applebloom said he knew a lot about them!" Scootaloo added.

"Since he goes out at night and watches them! Sometimes for hours...usually when he is all alone and nopony can see him." Applebloom explained innocently. "And sometimes he comes home smilin' from ear to ear! I saw it all! Once he even whistled a little tune as he came home!"

All eyes were pointed at the red stallion now.

"I do not!" Big Macintosh insisted, regaining life and scrambling to his hooves. "I never would! That ain't true!"

"Big Mac...I won't judge ya." Applejack said with forced calmness. "Yer a stallion in yer best years and it was always a bit weird that ya didn't get straight with some filly yet...But doin' stuff like that ain't polite!"

"But I didn't!" Big Macintosh insisted. "I never would!"

"WOW! That doubles the amount of words I've ever heard him say!" Pinkie Pie said in cheerful surprise.

She was ignored.

"Look, Mac...I got a-ton of good friends; we can sure as sugar match you up with at nice mare, so you don't have to...do *that*..."

"AJ, I am kinda seeing someone!" The stallion interrupted.

"What? Who? And does she know about your...*tendencies*?" Applejack snapped in alarm and anger.

"I have no tendencies!"

"Seriously, Macintosh, I mean, what would Granny Smith say if she knew about it?"

"I think granny went with him one night!" Applebloom added.

"*WHAT*?" Applejack shrieked. Spyro laughed even harder. "SHADDUP!" The orange earth-pony shouted at the kirin, who just kept laughing.

"I tell you, that ain't true!" Big Mac stressed. "And I never would do that to Ms. Cheerilee!"

"TEACHER!" Pinkie yelled.

"OH! You met her, doin' it, didn't you?" Applebloom interrupted, fawning innocently. "That's so romantic!"

"WHAT?"

"Applebloom! Are ya out of yer little mind?!" Applejack asked in shock. "My brother's watchin' fillies in their sleep, finds one silly enough to like that, and now my sister thinks it's *romantic*?"

"Sounds like something out of the Twilight Saga." Spyro whispered to Spike; the two dragons then chuckled at the thought...until both were glared down into deathly silence by an enraged Twilight.

"*NEVER* MENTION THAT BOOK SERIES IN MY PRESENCE!" Twilight screamed in rage, her eyes full of fury. "THAT BOOK *RUINED* MY LIFE! MY NAME IS *TWILIGHT SPARKLE*! THAT BOOK ROBBED MY NAME OF ALL ITS DIGNITY!" The unicorn then collapsed to the ground, wailing comically as tear-fountains erupted from the sides of her eyes.

"Fillies?" Applebloom asked, looking utterly confused. "I was asking him if he knew about *virgins*...you know...that star-thingie in the sky?"

Suddenly an aura of awkward understanding surrounded Sweet Apple Acres for a minute that felt like an hour.

Spyro merely chuckled to himself as he stood back up; he had a feeling that this whole thing was just that kind of misunderstanding. How else would three young, 'innocent' girls know about virgins? Now all that was left was to apologize to Applejack's brother and find out why in Tartarus would they want to lure out a star constellation.

"I'm sorry, Big Mac." Applejack said finally. "I shouldn't have jumped to conclusions."

"Is all right, AJ." Macintosh answered, still slightly shaken. "I'll go and work off some steam on the cider press. And then do some damage to the result."

"Erm...Big Mac...Ms Cheerilee?" Applejack asked, blushing lightly.

The stallion stopped and looked back. "Eeyup!" he stated with a wink and left.

"WOW!" Pinkie cheered. "Almost had it fivi...quinti...oh, you know what I mean! By two words!"

"I guess that love potion the Cutie Mark Crusaders made that Hearts and Hooves day really started something after all..." Fluttershy said, looking confused.

"But girls, why do you want to lure down the Virgo constellation?" Twilight asked...after reciting a short mantra that included something about 'vamponies' and 'not sparkling'.

"We want to feed it ta drag'n Spyro!" Applebloom answered cheerfully. Spyro cocked an eyebrow; apparently they didn't recognize him in this new form...which may not be a bad thing.

"Firstly: Dragons don't eat star formations! They eat gems when their young and meat when their adults." Twilight stated calmly. "Secondly: I thought we warned you girls to leave Spyro alone and not to cause any trouble with him!" She then said warningly, glancing to Spyro briefly, who looked just as confused as she was.

"We're not gonna cause trouble." Sweetie Belle explained. "We just want him to stay still while we study him!"

"*CUTIE MARK CRUSADER DRAGON EXPLORERS! YAY!*" The three yelled in unison.

The small headache Twilight had expected suddenly erupted into an outright migraine. But there was one thing that still remained dominant right now: "Are you going to sing?" She asked coldly.

"No."

"GOOD!" The unicorn shrieked, using her magic to soothe her headache. "Well, I've already started writing a Dragonology with Spyro's help, so you girls already missed your chance. If you want to know more about dragons, why don't you just ask Spyro. He can talk, so it's not like you have to force the information out of him."

"Nah, we'll go all Crocodile Wrestle on him!" Scootaloo announced, hitting her hoof together.

"Ya really want to approach a drag'n in the way of that Horsetralian Documenter?" Applejack asked uncertainly.

"Well, maybe not *wrestle* him...but we want some conclusive data about...dragon stuff!" Applebloom stressed. "We cannot let this opportunity pass!"

"Crusaders, AWAY!" Scootaloo announced and the three fillies disappeared in a cloud of dust.

"I think the guy who came up with the Four Horses of the Apocalypse over-counted by one." Spike stated after a while.

"Oh, don't worry!" Pinkie Pie reassured him. "Once they can't find Spyro when he's in pony form, they'll give up eventually." She grinned. "They have an even shorter attention span than...TWITCHY TAIL!" She suddenly screamed when her tail began vibrating like no tomorrow. All six mares and one baby dragon screamed before bolting under the cover of a tree, huddled together under the branches in terror.

"What are you girls doing?" Spyro asked.

"Get under here, quick!" Spike told him in a panicked tone. "Something's gonna fall from the sky!"

Deciding to put the question of how a twitchy tail means something's falling for later, Spyro quickly dove under the tree with the girls, squeezing himself in between them all and using his wings to shield them all, bracing for impact.

They heard an impact close by and everyone gave a sigh of relief. All eight looked in the direction of the impact.

Twilight managed to speak first.

"*Princess Celestia*?!"

It was indeed the Princess of the Sun herself, having just dropped down gracefully from the sky; she was certainly a lot taller and bigger in comparision to Spyro's new form.

Celestia smirked playfully when she saw the ponies in the shade of the tree. "I certainly hope I'm not interrupting *anything*." She said in a motherly amusement. All the mares looked at Spyro before quickly scampering away from him and standing near Celestia, blushing madly.

It was only when Spyro stepped forth from the shadows did Celestia see Spyro's new form; her eyes went wide with disbelief and awe. "*Spyro*? But how?" She asked. Twilight was surprised herself; she had never seen Princess Celestia stunned with disbelief before.

"It was trick I pulled off with Twilight's help." Spyro explained as the girls all bowed. "She blended her magic with that of my shapeshifting spell to give me a pony form to change into."

Celestia stared at him in thought for a few seconds before a brief look of realization flashed before her visible eye, an impressed smile coming to her face afterwards. "A very effective use of your magic, young dragon...though very foolish." She then said, her gaze hardening at both him and Twilight. "Do you realize that, if the spell went wrong, Twilight could've *killed* you by the magic tearing itself apart?"

Spyro and Twilight both cringed, the latter beginning to cower and tremble in her well-known state of nervous panic. Spyro, however, stepped forward before Celestia could 'banish her student and throw her in a dungeon in the place she banished her too' as a close-to-snapping Twilight was probably thinking it. "Please don't blame Twilight for this. I'm the one to blame." He said. "I suggested taking this form so I wouldn't have to hunt and kill the livestock and other creatures that the ponies care for, and to keep them from panicking at the sight of me. I knew the risks, even if I thought they weren't that great, and took them anyway. I'm the one at fault here."

Twilight could only stare at Spyro in awe.

Celestia's expression remained unreadable for a few seconds that felt like minutes, before her face softened into a warm smile. "Ignitus warned me that you had a knack for getting yourself into dangerous situations." She told him; he merely grinned sheepishly in response to all the girls' giggling. "However, I'm impressed and pleased with your courage and care for your new friends. Many other ponies or dragons alike wouldn't have taken risks for even their greatest friends. It was very honorable of you, Spyro."

"Thanks, princess." He said sincerly.

"Besides, the looks' good on you." The princess then said with a smile. "It's been a *long* time since I've seen a kirin like yourself."

"*Really*?" Spyro asked, looking back at his wings. "I'm *that* rare?"

"You are."

"Uh...Princess?" Applejack finally asked. "Did you just...fall outta the sky?"

"Yes." Celestia answered with a mischievous smile. "It is a spell Luna came up with. She calls it 'Drop In (TM)'."

"She trademarked it?" Pinkie asked from the back.

"Luna is still catching up to the present." Celestia explained. "She read about current law and, in a fit of panic, instantly went to trademark every new spell. I explained her that copyright law does not cover magic, but I thought it was so adorable, I just had to talk her into keeping it in the name. Sadly this spell is reserved for alicorns, since a unicorn would probably hurt herself on the way down..."

Spyro narrowed his eyes in an annoyed way at the mention of Celestia's young sister. "So...where is the 'Princess of the Moon' anyway?" He asked crossly. Twilight slightly cringed at the tone he was using toward the princess. "Attacking other innocent dragons wandering Equestria, I presume?"

"Oh, come *on*!" Rainbow Dash exasperated. "You're still on *that*?!"

"Dragons can hold grudges for centuries." Spyro softly growled, still keeping that flat, angered look. "Some for their *entire lives* should the offense be strong enough. Besides, even *if* I'm different than most dragons, that voice of hers was *painful*."

"She's grounded." The Princess of the Sun stated.

"*Grounded*?" Fluttershy asked.

"When she returned from her banishment in the moon, she instantly tried to bring eternal night, kill my faithful student and her friends, and destroy the Elements of Harmony. And let's not forget how she zapped my poor guards." Celestia answered with a stern look of a hardcore ruler. "I love my little sister deeply and the moment she accepted my offer of friendship was the most wonderful day of my life. But actions must have consequences!" She then smirked. "A full year without TV and going out is entirely justified."

"Does she even know what TV is?" Spyro asked.

"Nope." Celestia answered with a wink.

"Sounds a bit unusual for divine punishment if you ask me." Rarity told Pinkie Pie, who shrugged in response.

"I never said that the punishment was going to be harsh. Her original banishment was an exception!" Celestia stressed. "My first priority was to exclude her from her royal duties until she could catch up with history, technology, and current culture. She was outright disturbed when

she found one of the guards and one of the maids kissing in the break room. And then there was the incident with the microwave..."

"That much *progress* must be difficult for her." Twilight admitted.

"TRIBUTE!" Pinkie Pie announced loudly, grinning widely.

All eyes were on her for a minute.

"Pinkie, ya feeling all right?" Applejack asked after a few moments.

"Why do you always ask me that? Of course I am!"

"So...why are you here?" Twilight asked. "It isn't because of that incident in PonyVille this morning, is it?"

Celestia shook her head. "Even though you've managed to turn Spyro into a pony, I had a feeling that his cover would've been blown eventually. It just happened earlier than I was expecting." The Princess of the Sun told them, much to Twilight's embarrassment. Her horn suddenly glowed golden as she levitated something from behind her wings.

Spyro lit up. "My bags!" He exclaimed.

"The servant stuff found them in one of the guest suites." Celestia told them, levitating them over to Spyro and setting them over his shoulders; they were a lot bigger and heavier to a pony than to a dragon. "I guess my sister's outburst caused you to forget them. So I decided to Drop In (TM)..." she let out a short giggle after the trademark. "...and bring them back to you."

"Thanks." Spyro told her sincerly.

Celestia nodded, turning to Twilight afterwards. "As happy as it made me to see you again, Twilight, I can't spend more time with you for now. My guards are very protective. Thanks to Luna's new spell, I can slip out for a few minutes at a time, but my sister forbid if they find out. It seems that they fear that I might get attacked by a falling apple or rammed by a stray butterfly..." She explained with a wink.

"Oh, those are dangerous!" Pinkie exclaimed. "They lure you into a false sense of security as caterpillars and then: BAM! Dig a hole in front of your house and call it a construction site!"

In her eternal wisdom, the goddess of the sun ignored the element of laughter yet again. "Now, I must go," the princess stated as she spread her wings. "Have a pleasant day, my little ponies."

And with those words, Celestia disappeared in a flash of blinding light, leaving the seven ponies and baby dragon staring at the place where she used to be in a stunned silence.

"Okaaaay..." Spyro droned out, shuffling his wings to make his bags rest more comfortably. "What the heck was with the twitchy tail thing?" He asked.

Twilight shook her head to snap herself out of her daze. "I'll tell you as we help clean up the town." She told him.

PonyVille Library, hours later:

"What a day..." Spike stated as Twilight entered the library with the baby dragon on her back and Spyro behind her. "The sun's just barely setting and already I'm exhausted..."

"*You're* exhausted?!" Twilight snapped in a frustrated tone as she shut the door behind them with her magic; her fur and mane were slightly ruffled and dirty, a tired and currently cross look adorning her face. "You've done nothing but ride on my back the entire time we were all cleaning up the town and getting everypony back under control!"

"I know, and I'm *still* exhausted!" Spike exclaimed, completely ignorant to Twilight's rant. "I'm ready to call it a day, how about you?"

With that, Twilight merely bucked the baby dragon off her back, causing him to fly off with a cry of alarm and crash into one of the piles of books that had littered the floor ever since the day Spike had left for the Dragon Migration; the unicorn had never gotten a chance to clean it up yet. "Well, since you didn't lift *one claw* to help us, you can make yourself useful and clean up this mess we made in *your* cause." She told him sternly. "Now get to it!"

Spike just grumbled under his breath as he went to work picking up books.

"I'll be in the shower if anyone needs me." The purple unicorn told both dragons as she headed upstairs; with a flash of bright purple fire, Spyro re-assumed his dragon form, stretching out his spine and sighing in relief.

Spike looked up to his idol. "A little help?" He asked hopefully.

"Why not?" Spyro stated, turning to a pile of books nearby...but instead of picking up the book with his claws, he focused his gaze on them. He then closed his eyes, straining...something...with a deep growling groan, as if he was trying to concentrate on something in his...

All of a sudden, his twin horns burst to light with a dark purple aura of power. Magic. His magic resembled a dark pulsing fire than the usual sparkling glow of Twilight's magic. About ten of the books in front of him were engulfed with this same fiery glow and, with a small groan from Spyro, floated up into the air in front of the purple dragon.

Spyro then opened his eyes, keeping his concentration on his magic, though a look of surprise and pride quickly came to his face. "Hey! I did it! I can use Magic!" He cheered, amazed that he was actually using magic. It felt surreal to be doing something that he had been told wasn't real since he was a child.

Spike didn't say anything. He was frozen in place, staring at Spyro's glowing horns with wide eyes and a slack jaw. The book he was holding slid out from his claws, and he didn't even notice it hitting the floor.

"Spike!" Twilight called as she came down the stairs, levitating shower stuff like soap, shampoo bottle, a scrub brush, and a bathrobe near her. Her dirty fur was a sign she had yet to get in. "Have you seen the conditioner anywhe-" Her voice abruptly stopped when she saw Spyro wielding magic; the items she was carrying fell to the staircase with a loud clatter, though the stunned unicorn didn't react to it at all.

After a few more seconds, Spyro couldn't hold it any longer and dropped the books. "How was that?" He asked with a grin; his smiling face turned into one of confusion as he saw Twilight standing there, her right eye slightly twitching. "Uh...Twilight?" He asked, now slightly concerned.

"I...I..." She stuttered, completely at a loss for words.

This was impossible. Spyro hadn't ever used magic before, and dragons weren't suppose to be able to wield magic at all...and yet here he was, using the magic that had taken her so much time to learn back when she was a filly...and in *dragon form*, no less!

Just what was this 'purple dragon' suppose to be?!

"How...how...I...But..." Twilight continued to stutter. "How...How did you do that?" She finally asked.

"Lift the books?" Spyro asked, confused. "I just did what you do."

"But...but..it takes most ponies *YEARS* to get their magic to that level! You know how to clear your mind, focus the energy, and manipulate it to do what you want!" Twilight managed to exclaim. "It took even me *three months* under Celestia's tutorship alone to reach that level! But you...you..." She shook her head to snap herself out of her stupor once more.

'What are *you?'* She thought to herself.

Spyro beamed. He wasn't unfamiliar to being extra skilled with power, considering that was normal for purple dragons, but he couldn't help but feel giddy and proud of himself each time he succeeded in accomplishing a supposively impossible task. However, he never became too prideful and arrogant of his abilities; if he did, he knew there were thousands of bigger and stronger monsters in the Cosmic Ocean that could easily beat him down into humility, even if he had greater power...including a certain, dark-green scaled saurian he was all too familiar with.

"I guess that means our magic lessons have started?" Spyro asked with a sly grin.

Twilight sighed, merely rubbing her head with her hoof. "I guess so..." She said with her own weary smile. "I'll be in the shower should anypony need me." She told them, picking up her shower items and returning to the upper floor of the library. She needed a place to relax.

An Hour Later:

Twilight wounded up staying in the shower a lot longer than she was planning to; the hard day of work and stress, coupled with the crippling shock of Spyro's magic potential making itself known, had left the poor mare stressed and tired. A warm, relaxing shower was just what the doctor ordered, the lavender unicorn lounging in the tub as the water ran down her body, washing away both the dirt and her stress.

About an hour later (even she was surprised by the time) and when she was perfectly clean, she climb out of the tub and headed back downstairs to see what was going on now. She was wrapped up in a night-blue bathrobe that was decorated with stars and ended in fluffy white rims around the end of the skirt, collar, and sleeves, a matching belt wrapped around her waist and her hair glistening in the light of the setting sun.

Spike had cleaned up the mess and was, as usual, snoring on the floor with the broom still clutched in his claws. Twilight giggled at the sight, using her magic to levitate him onto a nearby cushion.

"He fell asleep about ten minutes ago." Spyro stated, not looking up from his book. "He got bored watching me write."

The purple dragon was currently sitting at the center desk of the room...writing something in a large green book with a large, red/orange feather, much to Twilight's surprise; She had never assume dragons like Spyro to be the reading/writing type. He then flipped the feather around with fingers, apparently using the soft tip to paint something in the book.

"What are you writing?" Twilight asked, trotting up behind him and looking over his shoulder, using her forehooves to hold onto his shoulder and lift herself up to see. Her eyes widened in surprise. "Is that...*me*?"

Spyro nodded with a slightly embarrassed smile. He was drawing a picture of Twilight outlined with black ink and colored with watercolor in what appeared to be a book of creature classification; it was a very good picture of her, too.

The feather he was using was of a Prehistorian Phoenix, which doubled as a pen and a paintbrush: the tips of the feather would change color to paint to his desire, and neither pen nor paint would ever run out.

The book itself was huge, even by dragon-sized standards. If standing on it's lower base it would be as tall as Twilight herself. It was very thick too, with over what had to be a thousand

pages; The pages looking old and golden-worn with age, but strong as ever: at the top-left corner of the current left page was the name and classification of the Pony species, and amongst the multiple illustrations of Twilight and Rarity in different angles and natural poses on the pages were facts and notes about Unicorn Ponies.

"Are you writing a Biology on Ponies?" She asked with interest.

"Just finishing up another category to my book." He answered. Once the picture was then breathed lightly on the page, emitting a soft light-blue light from his mouth; the very faint ice breath made the wet ink dry immediately. He then closed the book to show her the front; the binding was made from dark-green, overlapping dragon scales fused into a stiff leather binding, each scale as large as Twilight's hoof, and on the front in bold, crimson letters that seemed to glow in the dim light, was the title of the book.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PREHISTORIAN MONSTERS

"I have been writing this book during my travels throughout the Fantasy Realm; it holds data on all the creatures that are from my worlds and that the hunters of Lore battle." Spyro told her, skimming over his book with pride. "Everything you need to know about every kind of Prehistorian monster is in this book. Once I've collected data on all the creatures of this world, this book will finally be completed...Twilight...are you okay?"

The unicorn wasn't listening to Spyro anymore. She was staring at that book in an awed, almost hypnotized state, with those big, glittering 'Bambi Eye' pupils, which was easy to make with the big, cartoonish eyes these ponies had. If Spyro had known Twilight Sparkle better, he would've kept his book out of her sight for all time, but once Twilight Sparkle finds a book containing an entire world of unread knowledge...well, you do not want to be between her and said book when she finally snaps for it.

"Must...read...amazing...book..." Twilight murmured in a daze, reaching for it over Spyro's shoulder with that hypnotized gaze.

"Do *not* let her read that book!" Spike yelled, now fully awake, zooming up to them and jumping up onto the book to keep it shut. "Once she starts she'll never stop or do anything else until she's finished! And considering how big this book is, it'll take *weeks*!"

Spyro however, merely rolled his eyes in amusement before merely lifting his right claw and snapping his clawed fingers; the snap was so loud it echoed in the empty library, snapping Twilight out of her daze.

"Huh?! Wha...?" Twilight asked, shaking her head once more to clear it. "What just happened?"

"You were about to go crazy over my book." Spyro stated.

Twilight blushed, giving off an embarrassed 'Squee'. "Yes, well...umm..." Her gaze returned to the book. "Could I borrow it?"

"NO! Don't let her anywhere near it!" Spike quickly said, snatching it up in his claws...or at least he tried to, but failed; Celestia, it was heavier than all the Daring Do books combined! "If she starts reading this, she'll..."

"Calm down, Spike." Spyro told him. "We'll both be here to make sure she doesn't 'starve herself' or anything like that." He turned to Twilight. "Yes, you can borrow it, but be really careful; it's taken me over *two hundred years* to write everything in it, and I don't have a 'back up copy'."

"Thanks, Spyro." Twilight told him, shooting a triumphant smirk at her huffy number-one assistant. She used her magic to lift the book, but was surprised by the object her magic was now carrying. It was heavy! Not physically heavy, though, despite its enormous size. The scales of a dragon felt slippery to magic; their inherit resistance to basically anything did not stop with the arcane arts. It was one of the reasons why Twilight always practiced with Spike: if she could perform a magical spell on him, she could perform it on anypony. Twilight herself hadn't realized it yet, but the fact that she could levitate Spike was yet another testimony to her enormous magical potential.

But something about *these* scales seemed even more resistant than normal dragon scales...and she could even feel a small aura of power generated from them...*dark* power.

"The scales of the legendary Snakeasaurus." Spyro told her in a serious tone; he seemed very...hesitant...when he mentioned the name of this 'Snakeasaurus'. "Your own magic must be incredibly powerful if you can grip them at all."

"I-Is that another one of the monsters in this book?" She asked, setting the book back on the desk. It was too slippery to hold onto for long.

"The *worst of them all*." Spyro muttered darkly. "His section is near the end of the book if you want to read about him." His gaze scanned the unicorn's body. "By the way...what's with the robe?" He asked, changing the subject. "You ponies don't wear clothes anyway, so why now?"

Twilight opened her mouth to answer...but closed it after a while. "Hmmm...to tell the truth, I'm not really sure." She admitted. The two then laughed softly at that comment.

The flutter of feathered wings drew their attention to the nearby rack, where Spyro suddenly spotted a plump little bird with a square-ish body and bright orange beak. His feathers around his breast were a light brown, whereas the ones on his wings were darker in colour. An Owl, if Spyro guessed correctly.

"Hi, Owlowiscious. Did you have a nice hunt?" Twilight asked with a bright smile. She then perked up. "Oh, that reminds me! Spyro, I forgot to introduce you to Owlowiscious. He's my pet and junior assistant."

Spyro blinked, looking at the owl, which rotated his head to see him. "You have a pet owl? Why am I not surprised?" he asked, staring at Owlowiscious as the bird stared back at him. "Hi. I'm Spyro."

"Hoo."

"Spyro."

"Hoo?"

"Um...Spyro."

"Hoo!"

"*Spyro*!"

"Hoo?"

"I *said* my name's *Spyro*!"

"Hoo."

"GAAAAH!" Spyro roared, grabbing at his head with his wing claws. "I encountered Daimyo Hermitaurs with more understanding than you!"

"Spyro, he's an Owl. That's all he can say." Twilight explained with a raised eyebrow. Spyro didn't say anything, other than an embarrassed groan. Spike chuckled. "You shouldn't be laughing, Spike. You did the same thing." She stated flatly, causing Spike to huff. "Alright then, before you two go to bed, I need to send a letter to the princess to tell them of Spyro's progress. Spike?"

The baby dragon nodded and picked up his usual quill and scroll, awaiting Twilight's words.

"Dear Princess Celestia." Twilight began, with Spike writing her every word. "I bring rather unexpected but not unwelcome news: Spyro has already learned how to do basic levitation with his Magic Element. I await further commands in his training. Your faithful student: Twilight Sparkle."

Spike finished writing writing and was about to levitate the scroll when Spyro took it from him. "One more thing." Spyro stated sternly; he used his own Phoenix Feather Quill to quickly write a P.S. message before rolling the scroll up and picking up Spike with his free claw, squeezing the baby dragon like a squeaky toy, who made a similar sound as he squeezed out the green flames, sending the letter to the Princess.

"What did you write?" Twilight asked in confusion.

Spyro set a disoriented Spike back down, patting the small dragon's head. "Just a message for the Princess of the Night." He stated flatly.

Canterlot, The Balcony of Princess Luna's Personal Quarters:

Later that evening, back at Canterlot Castle, Princess Luna was bringing out the stars and the moon, in preparation for her vigil as Princess of the Night. While the spell did need much magic, it wasn't as much a toll on her strength as it usually was, for which she was glad. Smiling as the stars began to twinkle above, she waited for the return of her sister.

Celestia came a few minutes later, joining her at the balcony where she stood. "Ah, my sister, you've done it again." She said fondly.

"Thanks Tia." She said, using the affectionate name for her sibling. "So, how was the day?"

Celestia was about to answer when a familiar puff of smoke floated down from the sky above and rematerialized into a scroll in front of her face; she caught the scroll with her magic. "I wonder what's happened now..." She said softly as she unraveled the scroll and read it to herself. Her face lit up with surprise, though not unwelcomed surprise. "Well, this is interesting."

"What is?" Luna asked curiously.

"Spyro's already learned basic levitation with his magic." Celestia told her sister.

Luna's eyes widened in surprise. "*Already*?" She asked in astonishment. "But it usually takes *months*, if not *years*, for most ponies to learn that level of magic alone!"

"Ah, but Spyro is not a pony, is he?" The Princess of the Sun said wisely. She then paused as she read the last part of the note, her eyes widening once more, but this time out of amusement. "...I think *you* better read the last part, Luna." She told her sister, handing the letter to her.

Luna looked confused, but took the note anyway; when she read it...her right eye slightly twitched in trepidation:

'P.S.: Dear Princess Luna...

If you think a mere gift is going to buy a cease-fire, think again! The only way I'll let it go is if you accept the challenge of a one-on-one battle with me!

Spyro.'

"I told you the gift wasn't going to be enough." Celestia stated flatly.

For the first time in who knows how long, Luna looked truly afraid. "B-B-But I can't face him in a battle!" She squeaked loudly in alarm. "He can tear apart my magic without so much as *blinking* with his power! He'll rip me to pieces!"

Celestia couldn't help but laugh at Luna's remark. She knew that Spyro was a good dragon and wouldn't truly harm her, let alone kill her, but she couldn't help but find her younger sister's

fearfulness amusing. "Well, you did bring his wrath upon yourself." She reminded her. "I think applying to his terms is only fair."

"How was I suppose to know he's the legendary seventh element?!" The Princess of the Night exclaimed. "When you said you found the seventh element, I wasn't expecting him to be a *Purple Dragon from Prehistoria*!"

"Why else would a Prehistorian Dragon be in the palace?"

"I DON'T KNOW! *Please* tell me the other hidden elements aren't dragons!"

"Don't worry, sister. The others are not dragons." Celestia assured her.

Luna sighed with relief...until she saw the tightened smile on the Princess of the Day's face; the type of smile once has when their trying not to laugh. The blue alicorn groaned. "But their not ponies, are they?"

"Not even close." Celestia said with a laugh. "But if Twilight is successful with the method she used on Spyro, they could be."

"How will we know who are the ones?" Luna asked.

"*When the leader of the elements are found, the others will arrive, and thus the prophecy comes to light.*" Celestia recited calmly, staring up at the moon. "When I discovered Twilight to be the Element of Magic, the other five showed themselves in time. If Spyro truly is the legendary seventh element, then the other undiscovered elements will appear soon as well. My guess is that the first one is already in Equestria. The united Elements of Harmony are now our only hope."

The EverFree Forest, just outside Sweet Apple Acres:

The shimmering glow of the full moon cascaded over the EverFree Forest, bathing the extensive woodland in a faint silvery light. The timberland was quiet and still; nary a sound to be heard throughout the woods save for the gentle rustling of the trees in the wind.

Suddenly, a resounding crack pierced the silence, a branch on the forest floor snapping underfoot as a large, dark, slender beast tore through the undergrowth. The beast's mind was currently ensnared in a state of great irritation, for it had not fed well since it arrived in this strange new world. True, the smaller creatures in the forest provided nourishment enough, but the beast longed for something more satisfactory that would sate its now steadily growing appetite. For a moment it halted, sniffing the air, and detected a scent that it had been searching for.

With the speed matching that of any pegasus, the monster bolted through the trees until it reached the edge of the forest, and its gaze fell upon a small orchard, beyond which it would find exactly what it hungered for.

Flesh.

The Prehistorian Invasion in Equestria had begun.

5. The Fangs of the Night

CHAPTER IV: THE FANGS OF THE NIGHT

Sweet Apple Acres, midnight:

Just as a peaceful silence had encompassed all of the Everfree, so too was Ponyville basked in a similar state of tranquility as the moon's soft glow washed over the town. From Carousel Boutique to Sugarcube Corner, not a single soul stirred in their slumber; leaving the town in a state of quiet hither to unforeseen as everypony in town slept peacefully.

But that was all about to change.

It was the sound of panicking cattle and chickens that awoke Applejack from her sleep. She groaned in aggravation as she covered her head with her pillow in an attempt to block out the noise, but that didn't help at all; maybe there was a reason her bedroom was nearest to the barn...anyway, she had a big day of work tomorrow, with Applebucking Season coming up soon, and she didn't want to be deprived of sleep for it.

"Ugh!" She finally groaned, lifting her bed-maned head off her bed, her tired eyes glaring at the window. "This better be import'nt!" She growled as she slid out of bed, grabbing a flashlight from the nearby dresser with her mouth.

It took a moment for her eyes to adjust to the glare of the flashlight when she turned it on, but once she did she used it to guide her through the hallway, then living room, and finally the kitchen, using the back door to exit the house. Her family, Applebloom, Big Mac, and Granny Smith, were all still asleep, unaffected by the noise.

Applebloom probably didn't even hear it, her room being farthest from the barn. Big Mac probably was used to the noise by now, having lived and worked on this farm before Applejack was even born. And Granny Smith...well...she could sleep through anything.

The orange earth pony quietly shut the door behind her, though now she was wishing she had stayed in bed. It was almost pitch black at this hour, the moon being the only natural light strong enough to provide even the smallest amount of light to see by; Applejack swallowed hard,

steeling herself as she slowly headed toward the barn, keeping the flashlight's beam ahead of her.

Though she would never admit it, Applejack had a very strong fear of the dark, ever since she was a filly; there was no way to see what was around you, and you couldn't tell if there was anything lurking right next to you. And a flashlight didn't help her fear at all; as far as she was concerned, it only made it worse: now you were able to get a quick, frightening glimpse of whatever was in the dark with you before...

She quickly shook those thoughts out of her head, not wanting to think such things as she reached the barn door, the barn being about a hundred yards from the farmhouse, reaching out a hoof to open it...and it was then she heard it:

Nothing.

The sounds had died down to utter silence, as if they never came up to begin with. But it wasn't as if the noises just stopped...it was if they were cancelled. Stopped. She also noticed that the sounds of the night were also silenced; no crickets, no nocturnal birds, nothing.

Dead silence.

That was *not* a good sign; whatever was causing the nightlife to keep quiet must've been the same thing that got the livestock all rustled up. Applejack swallowed again, her heart beating slightly harder in fear as she looked about nervously. She couldn't see anything out of the ordinary, even if her flashlight, but that didn't mean anything...that...and the barn door was already opened a crack, as if something push itself inside. Maybe she should head-

CRASH!

Applejack nearly screamed as she jumped nearly ten feet in the air, her flashlight hitting the ground before she did, her heart beating furiously in her chest. The crash came from inside the barn, sounding like something knock over something heavy; the stack of barrels full of apple cider, most likely...but...those things were heavy. At least a hundred and fifty pounds per barrel, about the same as your average pony! For something to be able to knock down an entire stack of these...

The wind suddenly picked up, blowing open the doors of the barn with another loud crash.

Applejack *screamed*.

Throughout the entire barn laid the mutilated corpses of the livestock kept inside. The animals had been torn limb from limb, their innards splattered and thrown all over the floor and throughout the upper levels. The flesh had been devoured, picked clean and leaving only bloodied skeletons thrown across the floor, blood staining every inch of the floor and walls...along with strange burn marks where something had struck with fire or something.

But the sight that made Applejack's heart seize in her chest and her blood to run cold were the glowing, fiery purple eyes in the darkened end of the room; eyes as big as her head, accompanying the deep, murderous growl of a large predator.

'OH CELESTIA!' Applejack cried mentally as she turned tail and bolted for the farmhouse, running blindly through the dark as fast as her hooves would take her. The loud, crashing sound of tearing woods and the heavy footsteps of a four-legged predator told her that whatever that thing was, it had taken chase...and was gaining fast.

Suddenly the footsteps stopped, and Applejack felt a huge object fly overhead. Suddenly the creature touched down about twenty feet in front of her with an earth-shaking crash, though it landed as gracefully as a cat on all its feet...in fact, being silhouetted against the lights of the farmhouse, the earth pony could see the creature was like a giant black cat, with long spikes on it's back, a thick tail ending in a sharp weapon, and huge fangs growing from its jaws.

Applejack skidded to a halt, crying a tearful cry of pure terror as she scrambled away from the beast, running to nowhere in mind. *Anywhere* away from this shadow of death. The monster gave a truly horrible roar that sounded like a dragon's roar mixed with that terrifying 'caterwaul' cry, before giving chase, repeating the same action from before and landing in front of the mare, toying with her like a cat with a mouse. Applejack turned and ran again, barely missing being slashed to ribbons by its huge claws, wailing in terror as the monster picked up the chase again, this time going for the kill.

"HELP ME!" Applejack screamed at the top of her lungs, tears streaming down her face as she ran blindly for her life. "SOMEPONY! ANYPONY! IN THE NAME OF CELESTIA! ***HELP MEEEEEEEEE!***"

WHAM!

Applejack screamed in pain as the creature's enormous paw struck her from the side, delivering a harsh blow and sending the pony flying at least fifty feet through the air before crashing into the dirt of the cornfields, tumbling forward like a limp doll before skidding to a stop. Her entire body was screaming in pain, and she could barely breathe from having the air knocked out of her lungs. Her left chest and shoulder had been torn open, three long, bloodied claw marks now stretching across her upper-left torso, blood pouring from them.

Before she could even try to stand up, the massive paw of the creature slammed down on top of her, pinning her down in place. Applejack couldn't scream anymore; she could only whimper in pain and terror as she looked up at the glowing eyes of her captor. It was only when its prey was secure did bioluminesent stripes on its body suddenly flashed to life with a evil-looking purple light, creating a frightening glow of unearthly light about the area...and revealing the creature's appearance fully.

It was a medium-sized Fanged Wyvern Monster, about the same size as a Great Baggi, though shorter: 25 feet in length, 9 feet tall at the shoulders. Its entire body was like that of a big cat, a panther/tiger hybrid as best, fused with a dinosaur, much like a dragon's body. It's body was

streamlined and sleek-shaped like a cat's, but with a strong, saurian form and build to it. The long, muscular hind legs were like that of a therapod dinosaur, ending in thick cat's paw-like feet, as did the strong, muscular, but slightly short, almost human-like forearms, each of the four fingers/toes ending in a long, deadly claw. The tail was only a third of the overall body length, and was powerful and thick, shaped like a dinosaur's tail, but flexible like a cat's, ending in a large, powerful, bony weapon shaped like a double-bladed dagger. From the shoulders, back, hips, and upper tail grew long, thick, scythe-shaped spines, the longest growing from the shoulders and upper back and being as long as a pony is tall. Covering the body in different spot was scaly, draconic bio-armor, covering the lower legs, shoulders, chest, hips, and sides of the tail in sharp, streamlined blade-like armor; running down the spine from the head to the tail weapon was spiked, overlapping, crocodile-like plates matching the armor. The head was like that of a saber-tooth tiger, mounted on a strong, cat-like neck; it had armored cat-like ears, a short, cat-like snout ending in a tiger-like cat's nose, a trident head-shaped headcrest growing back from its forehead and running across its head, growing upwards at the back in three long, dragon-like horns, and a powerful set of jaws filled with sharp, dinosaur-like teeth, including the large saber fangs sprouting from the upper jaws and measuring as long as its shoulder spikes. It's fur was pitch black in color, the armor a dark night-blue, and the dorsal spines, teeth, and claws a dark sliver. Covering the creature's body, but only visible on the fur, were purple, tiger-like stripes that glowed with a deathly purple light. The eyes were also a bright purple in color and they glowed with their own poisonous light.

"No...p-p-please..." Applejack whimpered weakly, tears continuing to stream down her face and blood down her side. "Somepony...*please*...h-help..."

But no mercy was found in the monster's deathly eyes, a deep, angered growl drumming through its clenched teeth. The spines on its back, which had been laying flat against its ribs, flared upwards into full height while giving off more of that evil light, purple lightning crackling through them as it lifted its head back and opened its jaws...and Applejack saw, to her greater horror, the back of the creature's throat beginning to glow with the same light, more of that lightning leaping from the sides of its mouth.

Applejack tried to scream, but she had lost all strength to do so, her cry coming out as no more than a weak cough.

She closed her eyes tightly.

"GIT AWAY FROM MY SISTER!"

Before the tiger beast could strike, Big Macintosh came barreling from the side and rammed himself against the monster's shoulder; the beast was strong and powerful, and therefore wasn't harmed by even the strong earth pony, but it was knocked to the side and off Applejack. It roared in frustration as it landed further away, quickly facing the two ponies with an angry roar. Applejack could honestly say she had never been happier to see her brother in her entire life.

The monster gave a truly terrifying growl before charging up another attack in its mouth...when all of a sudden it stopped; the aggressive, rage-filled aura in its eyes died down, along with the light in its throat and from its spines, the latter of which slowly flatten down again. It sniffed the air again, mostly in Applejack's direction, its opal eyes narrowing in dark thought as it glared intently at the pale, blood-covered pony laying on the ground...as if it *recognized* her.

'Please leave...' Applejack begged, already feeling herself slip away into unconsciousness. *'Please...'*

As if hearing and answering her prayer, the beast stepped back a few feet, reared back its head, and let loose one loud, long, mind-scarring roar that would haunt the Apple Family's dreams for all time before it turned and bolted back to the EverFree forest, racing off at speeds that could out-match Rainbow Dash; as it began running off, the purple stripes lost their glow and the shadows around the creature seemed to merge with it, turning it virtually invisible in the dark of the night.

The roar still echoed through Applejack's mind, even after she let the blessed darkness consume her...but just before she passed out, a tiny but strong voice echoed in the depths of her fading mind.

"...I'm...sor...ry..."

PonyVille Library, Late Morning:

Twilight was deep in sleep when the sun began rising into the higher sky, currently asleep on a makeshift bed on the library's main room with a blanket wrapped around her and her head resting against a pillow. Spike, on the other hand, was already working; when he woke up, he had, as he was expecting, found Twilight sleeping over the library's central desk with her face buried in Spyro's open book, snoring lightly. As usual, he had put a blanket on her back and gently turned her around so that she came to lay down on the cushions he set up and her head onto a pillow. He was quite good at doing that without waking her up. He had a lot of practice, after all.

Twilight was a very special pony. Spike had always known that and she was also the only pony he knew who turned reading into...well...an unhealthy addiction.

Spike had heard of alcoholics leaving bottles littered around the floor or adrenaline junkies jumping at every little thing that might hurt them. Twilight Sparkle was, as he understood it, a *libroholic*: She needed knowledge in the way others needed food or approval or a nice glance at Rarity's flank-water!

When they were still in Canterlot, he sometimes worried that he would come back to find her skeleton in the library, covered in cobwebs and still hunched over a book she had been reading, or would run into her selling bookmarks in back allies for a quick glance at an original copy of

something. Now, even with her friends to keep what was left of her sanity intact, she could end up spending an entire weekend locked in the library, draining knowledge from the volumes...and with this big new book of Spyro's, this was going to be an even bigger case than usual.

It was always the same process: "Spike, I tell you, this is so interesting! Did you know that (random topic)! I need to find a cross reference! Fetch me (5 books from different authors) about (a somewhat similar topic)!"

That would then start a pyramid of research, usually ending at about 60 books, reports, and papers. During that time, Spike would do his best to keep her hydrated, force some food down her throat, and finally command his junior assistant to put her to bed. He was pretty sure that Celestia saw in him the only way to keep Twilight from killing herself with those leather-bound dangers.

Though he had to admit: Spyro's book *did* look cool. The page Twilight had fallen asleep on showed mutiple pictures and writings of a large raptor dinosaur-like beast with beige/orange skin, a spike-lined tail, and two large frills hanging from the sides of its head. The book said this monster was called a 'Great Jaggi', the alpha male of a species of smaller monsters called 'Jaggis', who hunted in packs and could be deadly in large numbers. The page also described how the slightly larger females were called 'Jaggia', and how younger male Jaggis would leave their packs and battle each other to become Great Jaggis when they grew older.

What other kinds of cool monsters lived in Spyro's world? The world of dragons.

BOOM!

Just when he finished his work in the kitchen, an explosion erupted through the tree; it came from the library! The young dragon turned and ran into the main room.

"Twilight?!" He yelled as he reached the doorway.

Twilight groggily opened her eyes and looked around. Every book in the room was floating in circles around her, some bigger than others, and a few circled each other, making it a very unique solar system with Twilight's horn in the middle.

"I had a sleep-spell." Twilight groaned as she shook her head.

"Great..." Spike muttered and went to fetch the dip net he kept for these occasions. Twilight was stuck in the middle of the books and had to wait until Spike was done. Sleep-spells were not uncommon among unicorns. When a dream got very intense, they sometimes unconsciously cast small spells that would affect their surroundings. They usually knocked over their alarm clocks, moved the bed for one or two centimeters, or if you were Twilight Sparkle, the spirit of Magic itself, punched the laws of Time and Space inside out.

The door from upstairs opened and Spyro, as a dragon, came bounding down the steps. "What's going on?! Sounded like something explo-" He reached the bottom of the stairs to see a

galaxy of books floating about the room and around Twilight's head, and Spike using a dip net to gather all the books up from the sky. "Wow...what happened?" He asked finally.

"Sleep Spell." Spike stated flatly, as if it was yesterday's news.

Spyro decided not to question it as he slithered and slid through the floating books in a serpentine fashion, heading straight for Twilight and his 'Encyclopedia of Prehistorian Monsters'.

"So, did you enjoy my book?" He asked, shutting it for now.

"Immensely, and I'm not even halfway through." The unicorn said with a smile. "I used to think the dragons and other 'monsters' of *my* world were scary, but their *nothing* compared to these creatures! I'll never look at that Hydra incident seriously again..." She said in an awed tone. She then gave Spyro a slightly concerned look. "Do you have to fight and put up with these creatures every day in your home?"

"Not that often." Spyro told her. "We monsters, not counting the herbivores, usually don't bother each other unless its important. The real enemies are the mortal Rukian descendents of the World of Lore that try to hunt us that we usually put up with." He dipped his claw into the ink cartage and began drawing out a depiction for her. "You see, long, *long* ago, the World of Prehistoria were connected to the worlds of Lore through portals..." He explained, drawing out lines that connected the spheres. "...and thanks to these portals the monsters of Prehistoria have populated the world of Lore. The humans living there have taken up the duty of 'Monster Hunting' to protect themselves, but over the years it has now become more of a sport, and the 'Monster Hunters' have been hunting us monsters ever since."

Twilight shuddered at the thought of being hunted like an animal. "Have *you* ever been...*hunted* before?" She asked softly in concern.

Spyro actually chuckled. "Plenty of times." He told her. "But not only am I a monster too powerful for most hunters to tangle with, I, being human once, know all the tricks they have up their sleeves and know very well how to stop them. It's actually kinda fun to battle them."

Twilight rolled her eyes at that, her concern fading into annoyance. "Ugh! What is it with you stallions? Always so eager to fight?"

"Hey, it's not just because I'm a guy! Even the female monsters and female humans do it, too, like Rathians and stuff!" The purple dragon said in his defense. "But for your race and the whole fighting thing, I blame lack of hormonal control."

Twilight was about to change the subject, when the door to the library burst open as Rainbow Dash came crashing through it, barreling into Spyro and the purple unicorn, sending all three tumbling across the floor and into the bookshelf with a loud crash.

Twilight groaned as she pushed herself out from under her fellow pony. "Ughhhh...Rainbow, what's going-?"

"No time to talk! A monster attacked Applejack last night!" Rainbow Dash told them frantically, jumping back into the air.

No more was needed to be said.

Sweet Apple Acres, a half-hour later:

"Oh, Celestia..." Twilight groaned, swallowing hard to keep her stomach contents down.

The bright sun and clear skies only seemed to mock the condition of the home of the beloved Apple Family. The barn doors and doorway had been smashed through, leaving blood-covered splinters scattered all over the road in front of the building...and leaving the view of the slaughter inside wide open. The carnage was even worse than Applejack had seen, every animal on the acres torn apart and spilled all throughout the barn, blood soaking every inch of the interior of the structure...and the large, cat-like paw prints littering the earth nearby. And last of all, a path had been torn through the orchard, as if something big and powerful had smashed its way through the trees on its way back to the EverFree Forest...and lining the path were the same paw prints near and in the barn.

The five mares and one dragon were currently standing about twenty feet from the barn door, the girls looking about in horror and other mixed emotions:

Twilight was showing great interest in the paw prints, probably in an attempt to keep her focus off the bloodied skeletons and her food in her stomach. Rarity didn't even bother trying to hold it down, quickly whirling around and vomiting up her breakfast right then and there. Fluttershy was trembling in sorrow and terror, tears running down her face at the sight of the dead animals. Rainbow Dash had a frown of both disturbed thoughts and angry promises on revenge against the monster that did this. Even Pinkie Pie was silent and still, her hair deflated from its usual poofy look to straight and dark, her face saddened and frightened at once.

Rarity coughed as she rid her mouth of the last of her regurgitation, wiping her lips with her hoof. "By Celestia..." She coughed once more. "What in Equestria could do such a horrible thing?!" She asked finally. "Not even those brutes in the EverFree Forest are *this monstrous*!"

"That's because it wasn't from the EverFree...nor is it even from Equestria." Spyro growled, leaning down and scraping his claws across the inside of one of the prints, which was big enough for a pony to fit in should she curl up. "Applejack was attacked by a monster from Prehistoria; a *Twilodon* to be exact. I'd recognize the footprints anywhere."

"A what-now?" Rainbow Dash asked.

"A Twilodon, the only other monster species in the Fanged Wyvern class other than the Jinouga." Spyro explained. "It's name literally means 'Fangs of the Night', which is what is it

known as by most hunters. It resembles a giant panther/tiger hybrid with saber teeth and draconic armor and weaponry, and is one of the rarer monsters of my home world."

"But how is that even possible?!" Twilight asked, looking frantic. "The portals you spoke of have *never* been connected to Equestria anytime in the world's existence! How could a monster from Prehistoria have made its way here?!"

Spyro looked deep in thought; a look the others recognized from Twilight a lot. "Well, the *only* time the two worlds are connected is when we dragons come for the Dragon Migration...but only a monster that could fly could get through that way, like a Rathalos of other such Flying Wyverns or Elder Dragons. Twilodons are pretty good jumpers, being cats and all, but they can't fly and the portal's still way too high for even them to reach."

"B-B-But why would this m-m-monster *do* t-this?" Fluttershy whimpered.

"It was merely hunting." Spyro stated, merely kicking aside the bloody skull of a cow; the eyeball of the right eye socket was still there, and the left was hanging out by its optic nerve cord. "Twilodon mutilate smaller prey to death with their sharp claws and teeth, usually ripping them apart to get to the good stuff inside. To kill and eat this much means it hadn't fed in days."

Twilight frowned. "But...if it was so hungry, then why didn't it kill and eat Applejack?" She asked. "It attacked her, but didn't finish her off; from what Big Mac told us it just sniffed the air before roaring at them and running back to the EverFree. Applejack was right there, helpless and ready for the kill, and it was obviously hungry...yet it let her and her brother go. Why?"

"Maybe it doesn't like the taste of ponies?" Pinkie Pie offered hopefully.

Spyro shook his head. "No, I've seen some eat the horses of defeated hunters before." He told them. "Ponies wouldn't be any different." He then frowned himself. "I just don't know; Twilodons *always* go for the kill, with both hunting and battling opponents, never showing mercy. I've never heard of a Twilodon sparing its prey before...unless..."

He trailed off, perking up in surprise and realization.

"Unless *what*?" Twilight asked.

Spyro rubbed his chin with his claw. "I'm not exactly positive...I'll have to ask Applejack when she wakes up to be sure."

"But AJ's gonna be in the hospital for a while." Rainbow Dash told him. "She was still in operation when we went to check up on her this morning. Poor Big Mac and Applebloom were worried sick. Granny Smith fainted when she found out about the attack."

"The poor dear...*fifty stitches and three broken ribs*!" Rarity exclaimed with a shiver. "It'll take her *months* to recover from such wounds! I'm just glad we got her there before it was too late!"

"And that isn't good since the Apple Harvesting Season is coming soon." Twilight added. "I don't think Big Mac will be able to handle this entire orchard on his own."

Fluttershy sighed. "I wish we could've save her before it happened..." She said sadly.

"I say we find that monster and put an end to its reign of terror before it hurts somepony else!" Rainbow Dash announced aggressively as she hovered above the others, pounding her fore-hooves together. "That over-grown hairball barfer will pay for what it did to Applejack! WOAH!" She suddenly cried as Spyro grabbed the pegasus' tail in his mouth and pulled her down to earth.

"Seeking revenge against the creature and getting yourself killed in the process won't help Applejack anymore than it'll help you!" Spyro snarled after spitting out Rainbow Dash's tail. "Twilodons are fast, strong, powerful, and cunning...and it probably already knows this part of the EverFree like the back of its paw; it'll tear you all apart if you go in after it!"

"Spyro's right." Twilight told them. "It's too dangerous to go in after it."

"But we can't just let this thing go about attacking anypony else!" Rarity exclaimed.

"Au contraire, Lady Rarity." Spyro said coyly. "That's *exactly* what we're going to do. Twilodon's always hunt in the same areas it finds food in: it knows Sweet Apple Acres has food, and it'll be back soon...and when it does come back, we'll be waiting for it."

"We're gonna set up a trap?" Rainbow Dash asked eagerly.

"Indeed we are..." Spyro told her. He then turned thoughtful again "...but first, perhaps we should see how Applejack's doing."

Applejack groaned as she opened her eyes, her head still drumming from the strange headache she had woken up too. She was in her bedroom, laying on her familiar apple-decorated bed, the window curtians pulled back to reveal the night sky looming outside; the skies were pitch black, no stars or moon at all.

Despite the familiarity of her room, something wasn't right. Applejack was the kind of pony who knew through gut instinct when something was wrong with her home, and something was horribly wrong. It was too dark...too quiet...too unwelcoming to be her home. Fearing for her family, she quickly climbed out of bed and headed out into the hall.

"Hello? Big Mac? Applebloom? Granny?" She called as she cautiously crept through the house; she checked each of the family members' bedrooms, but found no one in them. "Where is everypony?"

She made her way down the stairs, but noticed something definately strange: the further she went forward, the darker and more sinister everything seemed to change. Dread began to brew in her stomach as she reached the end of the stairs, heading into the family room; this too was empty, and almost pitch black in darkness...but a purplish light from underneath the kitchen door caught her attention...a light that seemed darkly familiar.

"Hello? Kin?" She asked, slowly approaching the door. She could feel her heart pounding against her ribcage as that dread in her stomach turned to fear, but she continued to reach for the door handle, knowing her family could be on the other side.

She opened the door.

And screamed at the top of her lungs.

Just like the cattle, Applejack found Big Macintosh, Applebloom, and Granny Smith's mutilated corpses splattered all over the kitchen. Big Mac was no more than a skeleton burned in charred bloodied flesh. Applebloom's organs had been torn out of her skinned, slash-covered body and thrown all over the floor. And Granny Smith looked as if has had been sent through a meat grinder.

But before Applejack could react after her scream, she saw, to her utter horror, in the pitch-black shadows of the far kitchen wall...the same glowing purple eyes glaring at her from the dark.

The beast roared, the shadows themselves forming into the saber-fanged jaws of the monster and lunging at her before she could scream.

PonyVille Hospital:

"NOOO!" Applejack screamed in bloody terror, nearly throwing herself out of the bed in her thrashing panic. "NO! NO! KEEP AWAY FROM ME!"

"AJ, calm down!" Rainbow Dash cried, keeping the screaming mare pinned to the bed. "You'll rip out your stitches!"

"You're safe now!" Pinkie Pie told her, her hair back to its poofy form but her face still filled with worry. "That Meanie Mean-Pants Monster can't get you here!"

The orange earth pony finally calmed down when she heard her friends' voices, her heart hammering in her chest as she gasped for breath, looking about at her surroundings. She was in a hospital room of the PonyVille County Hospital, currently laying in bed with a hospital gown/bib around her upper body. She could feel a deep but thankfully faint burning throb in her entire left side, and her left foreleg was wrapped up in a sling. Surrounding her bed were her friends and family; Twilight, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, Rainbow Dash, Spyro (now as an

kirin), Big Macintosh, Applebloom, and Granny Smith were surrounding her bed in that order counter-clockwise.

Tears came to Applejack's eyes as she gaze upon her friends and family, the terror and trauma of last night's encounter building up before bursting forth: she broke down and sobbed into her hooves, not caring who was watching.

"T-T-There was a m-m-monster...it k-k-killed the l-livestock...Then it a-a-attacked me! I-I-It was *horrible*!" She wailed, tears flowing uncheck down her cheeks. Big Mac came up to her right and put his foreleg around his sister as gently as he could, holding her against him as she turned and sobbed into his chest, her crying muffled into his fur.

"We're so sorry about the attack, Applejack." Twilight told her sincerly. "We should've been there to help."

"It wasn't like we had much of a choice, not knowing a Twilodon had arrived in Equestria until it destroyed half of Sweet Apple Acres." Spyro stated flatly.

"Spyro!" Twilight scolded softly.

"A Twah'lo-what?" Applejack asked softly, still sniffling, looking up from her brother.

"A Twilodon." The purple kirin repeated. "That's the name of the monster that attacked you last night; it came from Prehistoria. It looked like a giant black tiger with spikes on its back and sword-like fangs, right?"

Applejack nodded weakly, clinging to Big Mac as the memories flooded back to her.

"I thought so."

"Who might ye be, sonny?" Granny Smith asked.

Granny Smith was an elderly earth pony that had to be at least eighty, her almost skeletal body, white mane and wrinkly skin being the obvious telltale signs of her age; Spyro could almost hear the rusty creaks of her joints when she moved. Her eyes were orange in color, and her skin was apple-green; her mane and tail was white, both being tied up in old lady buns. Around her neck and shoulders she wore a apple-decorated bandana, and her cutie mark was of a big apple pie.

"I'm Spyro, Twilight's new apprentice. Princess Celestia assigned me under her tutorship." Spyro told her and Big Macintosh. Twilight blinked in surprise at the idea of him being her apprentice...but soon grinned at the idea; no true wizard didn't have an apprentice, and now she had one too!

Applebloom's eyes went wide. "Wait, *'Spyro'*?" She asked. "Wait...yer...yer him! Yer that purple drag'n from before! We were lookin' *everywhere* for ya yesterday!" The filly exclaimed. Twilight, Spyro, and the other four young mares looked at each other fretfully.

"Drag'n?" Granny Smith asked...before she and Big Macintosh began chuckling. "Come on now, Pipsqueak. That's no way ta treat a guest from the princess herself; sure he's an kirin and he's got drag'n's eyes, but he's still a pony just like us."

"But-" Applebloom began.

"Now, what's all this about some Twah'light Tiger Monster yer goin' on about?" The elderly mare asked.

Spyro took a deep breath through his nose. "The monster that attacked your farm last night is called a Twilodon, a cat-like monster that comes from the world of Prehistoria." He explained. "From what we could discover through the mess it left behind, it hadn't fed in days and came to your farm looking for food. The monsters of Prehistoria are far more powerful and dangerous than anything you have in this world, and the Twilodon is one of the rarer and more dangerous species."

"I know!" Applebloom suddenly quipped. "Spyro! Ya can use yer drag'n powers ta beat that monster when it comes back! Ya just gotta!" She begged, giving Spyro the biggest 'bambi-eyes' he had ever seen.

Spyro honestly wanted to say yes, but he had a cover to keep; fortunately the years of being a human before and living alongside adorable creatures had helped to developed an 'immunity' against that big, sad-looking eyes trick. "I can't defeat one anymore than you can..." He said with a weak smile, before turning to the other Apple Family members with a serious look. "But she's right, it will be back. It knows there's food at Sweet Apple Acres, and it'll be back for more tonight."

Applejack's fear and trepidation became much worse. "W-W-W-What are w-w-we gonna d-d-do?" She asked, praying to Celestia for anything that could save them.

"We're going to wait for it to come back." He told them. "And have a trap waiting for it." He then turned to Twilight and her friends. "In Prehistoria, the hunters use what are called 'Pit Traps' and 'Shock Traps' to capture monsters on certain missions. I know how to make them, but I'm going to need each of you to help gather the supplies and materials needed to do so."

"You can count on us!" Rainbow Dash said with a salute, zooming out the door in a flash of rainbow colors.

"Don't worry, Applejack. We'll stop that monster before it causes anymore harm." Twilight assured her before she and the others began heading for the door.

"Wait!" Spyro told them, causing them to all stop and look at him in confusion; the purple kirin then faced Applejack. "Before the creature left or before you passed out, did you hear a voice or something speak to you?"

Applejack's gaze lowered in thought, a frown of confusion and thought adorning her features. "...Ya know...I *did* hear somethin' just before passin' out." She told them softly. "It was a voice, just like ya said; I didn't understand what it was sayin', though...but, how'd ya know that?"

Spyro sighed, his fears confirmed. "Nothing." He told them. "Now, let's get to work on those pit traps!" He then said sternly as he could and left the room without so much as another word.

Sweet Apple Acres, Evening:

Some of them would say making the pit traps was the easy part; the waiting for the creature to show up was the nerve-wrecking aftershocks. Over ten pit traps had been set up around the farmhouse, each baited with the body of a deer or a wild boar (contributed by Spyro, much to Fluttershy's horror), while all those waiting were hiding out in a nearby ditch covered by fake shubbery, the five mares dressed in the same army outfits they wore during the Dragon Migration. Spyro was there as well, but he didn't seem very tense or anxious at all.

"Ugh, what is taking this so *long*?!" Rainbow Dash groaned in annoyance, lifting up the end of their cover to peek out from underneath it. "We've been waiting for *two hour*s! Where is that stupid animal?!"

"Twilodon's can stay awake during both day and night, but they favor the night as a natural cover." Spyro told her, slightly annoyed; she had been gripping about this since the first half hour. "It'll be dark before it'll come, even if it decides too."

"At least I packed us all sleeping bags!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed, suddenly pulling a sleeping bag out of nowhere with an explosion of confetti and noise-makers.

"Shhhh!" Twilight shushed her harshly. "We're trying to stay hidden here!"

Fluttershy stared sadly at the dead animals. "D-Did we have to use those poor creatures for bait?" She asked with a sniffle. "I-I mean, I know that you and this cat monster has to eat meat, but..." She couldn't finish.

Spyro stared apologetically at the creamy pegasus. "Sorry, but it's the only way it'll go for the traps." He told her softly. "Besides, it was better to kill them ahead of time instead of strapping them down alive and letting the Twilodon tear them apart alive, right?"

Fluttershy shivered, trying not to cry.

"Um, I don't mean to interrupt, but just what are we planning to do when this monster shows up, exactly?" Rarity asked; along with her gawdy army dress, she was also wearing a matching scarf and boots to protect from the cold. "I'm kind off under the impression that Spyro here would kill it."

If anyone noticed Spyro become uneasy with that statement, they didn't react to it.

Twilight also didn't like that statement. "Don't you think that's a little dangerous?" She asked with concern. "If this monster is as dangerous as Spyro claims, then even he could be seriously injured in this fight, if not worse."

"Well, what else do you plan for us to do?" Rarity asked with a cocked eyebrow. "Battle it ourselves? We're ponies, not dragons; if anyone's going to have a chance against this beast, it's going be Spyro."

Twilight opened her mouth to respond, but closed it when she realized Rarity was right. For not only were dragons made to kill and fight, but had something ponies have never had besides claws, teeth, tail weapons, fire breath, and other such destructive powers and abilities: the will and ability to kill without hesitation. Ponies were not meant for war or battle, even if they had bodily weapons and powers for war; most could barely stand the thought of harming pest animals that attacked their crops, let alone be able to kill creatures that were at the same level they were. Heck, land disputes in Equestria had been fought with *pies* rather than real weapons! Ponies were *not* predators, at times there were fights and the rare killing in anger or jealousy, but there was nothing in them that allowed killing unless their lives or loved ones were threatened, and even then they were limited by the fact they were literally harmless creatures, able only to bite with flat teeth, buck with relatively soft hooves, or, in unicorns' cases, gore their foes with horns that were barely more than a foot long at best. Magic was useful in battle, but even then it was magic of friendship and harmony, not death and destruction. Alicorns and Kirins were the only ponies worthy of war.

"Well, Spyro? Would you fight it?" Twilight asked hopefully.

Spyro sighed. "Of course I will." He told them all. "But I'm going to need your full coopertation."

"Got it!" Twilight and the other ponies said in unison, all of them lining the trench facing the EverFree Forest and waiting for their opponent to arrive.

PonyVille Hospital, Midnight:

"*AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHH*!"

Once more Applejack awoke screaming in mortal terror from the fangs of the night haunting her dreams, a fresh bolt of pain tearing through her body from the jerking movement of sitting up. She squeezed her eyes shut as she gritted her teeth in pain, her heart pounding in terror as her ribs and slashes burned with pain. She stayed like that, tears squeezing out from the corners of her eyes, until the pain slowly died down to the tolerable throb...but she didn't go back to sleep. She just sat in bed, leaning against the backboard, letting the tears run down her face; she wasn't sobbing, or even truly crying, she was simply sitting there with fear-filled eyes yet a calm, depressed face, the tears running down her cheeks without a single sound from the mare.

Why her? Out of all the creatures in or near the EverFree Forest, why did this 'Twilodon' choose her and her family as its buffet? It was night now, the only light being Luna's moon, and no doubt the creature would be back. She could just picture returning home with her injuries healed to find her family and friends torn limb from limb like the livestock had been...and she was here, trapped, helpless to stop them from dying.

She sniffed as she wiped her face with her hoof, wiping away the tears before turning to look out the window to her right, which her bed was next to. The moon was shining in the sky above, the stars twinkling in the vastness of the dark, giving what was normally a feared time a feeling of hope and comfort.

"Please, Celestia..." She prayed silently, the moonlight reflecting in her watery eyes. "Please help us git through this. I know it's a lot ta ask, but I couldn't live with the thought of my family dyin' thanks to my mistakes." She was jus talking now, but that's what she really needed: to get all this off her chest. "I-I guess this whole mess is kinda my fault; If *only* I had stayed in bed, instead of goin' out and lettin' that monster know we lived there..." She carefully laid back down and rested her head against her pillow, trying hard not to cry. "I'm sorry, everypony...I brought this all upon ya."

A deep growl echoed through her room.

Applejack froze, familiar terror gripping her heart as that equally familiar sound echoed in her ears. Her body trembling, which also caused the pain in her ribs to increase, she slowly turned her head toward the far corner of the room, which was pitch-black in shadow.

And in those shadows were a pair of glowing purple eyes.

"No...No...P-P-Please..." Applejack began, her eyes wide in terror as she back up against the backboard. "I-I-It's just a d-d-dream...just a d-d-dream!"

The eyes narrowed, as if in confusion, before the room suddenly lit up in a faint flash of ghostly purple light as the stripes on the beast flared to life once more; the creature was standing partially hunched down, its spines just brushing the ceiling...and its body blocking the door from Applejack's view, seperating her from her only escape...then it slowly began to approach; the beast seemed to glide or even slither through the air in cat like movements, pausing every now and then as if stalking her.

The orange mare whimpered as she cowered against her bed in terror, a fresh wave of tears pouring from her eyes as the Twilodon stopped directly at the side of her bed, towering above her like the shadow of death itself. It's glowing eyes bore into her own with a dark look of deep thought, a stern growl emitting from its throat.

"N-no...p-please..." Applejack begged weakly, the urge to screamed consumed by fear.

The Twilodon then lifted its paw up, as if reaching out to touch her; the claws stretched out to full length with the sound of slashing metal, glistening in the moonlight from the window. Applejack could only tremble and gape in horror as the claws slowly neared her chest.

Pain shot through her as the claws suddenly punched through her bandages, digging into her stitched wounds before grabbing the bandages and pulling, trying to remove them. It felt as if it was pulling her ribs clean out, fresh blood trickling down the side of her chest. Applejack tried to scream, but it came out as a dry cough, her eyes squeezed tight in horror.

"N-no...no...don't...please...stop!" Applejack weakly gasped. She tried to struggle, but lost all strength to do so.

With a snap that backlashed a sting of agony in her ribcage, Applejack's bandages snapped and were pulled off. The mare opened her eye a crack to see her entire left side a torn, bloody mess, as if her entire left chest had been torn clean off before being stitched back onto her body again. The Twilodon glared at the doctor's work in what could've been a disappointed manner, eyeing the stitches oddly before leaning down to sniff them; Applejack gasped as the felt the creature's breath again her burning wounds; instead of being warm like most creatures, it was deathly cold, even more than ice...which felt slightly soothing on her body, though she was too frightened to give much thought to that.

Then, with a monstrous roar, the Twilodon lunged forward and struck.

A howl of terror and pain finally erupted from Applejack as the Twilodon's front teeth sank into her wounds, keeping the saber fangs clear of its victim, but tearing through the stitches and punching all the way down to her ribs all the same; she kicked and struggled violently, screaming like a banshee the entire time, until the monster pinned her legs down with its front paws, standing over her as its teeth pushed her ribs back into position with painful snaps. Applejack's screams rang throughout the room as she thrashed her head back and forth, tears flying from her dialating eyes as pain of the likes from hell racked through her body and sent blood spilling down her sides.

"***HELP MEEEEEEE!***" She screamed, despite the pain it brought. "***PLEASE HELP MEEEEEE!***"

Just as she felt she was going to die, a familiar voice surged through her mind.

"Calm down. I'll help you."

It had to be a miracle Applejack heard the voice through her panic, let alone responded to it. She gasped for air as she went limp, only trembling slightly now, her eyes staring at the ceiling in shock, the pain of the creature's teeth fading slightly as she stopped struggling. She managed to bring her gaze down to meet the glowing right eye in front of her; the poisonous glare had faded down to a gentle glow, revealing the creature's dagger-shaped pupils staring back at her...in remorse.

"I'm here to right what I've wronged."

The sides of the creature's mouth began to glow and crackle with the same purple energy from last night, but it seemed to do so differently and much gentler than before.

Applejack gasped as she suddenly felt a cold, shadowy energy flow into her gashes, tingling like static electricity yet cooling like ice as it flowed through her upper-left body. She wasn't sure if it hurt of not, the zaps making her flinch slightly...but the icy coolness was welcomed greatly by the earth pony, soothing down the fiery burning in her slashes and ribs.

What she felt next certainly made her flinch; her ribs, which had been pushed into the correct position by the Twilodon's teeth, began to heal. The shattered bone fit together like puzzle pieces before fusing back into one piece, the cracks and breaks sealing to make the bone whole once more. Little need to say it was very uncomfortable, but it was a good kind of uncomfortable; Applejack could feel the pain of broken bones washing away like water. Also, the blood from her wounds had also stopped flowing, the energy of the cat's power stopping the life-threatening flow onto the sheets below her.

The Twilodon kept his teeth in her flesh until the ribs healed completely, the pain in Applejack's bones now completely gone, before slowly and carefully removing his teeth from her wounds; her ribs were healed, but her blood-caked slashes still burned against her flesh. The big-cat sniffed her wounds once more before extending his long, sand-papery tongue, which began to glow with that same light from before.

The large, wet muscle gently stroke across Applejack's chest, making the mare flinch with each stroke; the sand papery toughness of the cat's tongue scraped across her open wounds, making them throb in pain...which began fading with each lick. She looked down once more to see that, with each lick, the wounds and the pain with them began getter smaller and smaller, slowly sealing back up as that purple energy coursed from the tongue into her flesh.

Once it was done, retracting its tongue and then licking its own nose out of habit, the slashes and injuries Applejack had received before were now completely gone, along with the pain caused by them.

Applejack gave a truly relieved sigh of relief, sinking back into her bed as her body adjusted to its new-found freedom; her left side was still slightly tender, but healed none the less. She looked up at the creature before her with grateful eyes; she still felt a pang of fear for the huge monster before her, but she knew now that if it really wanted her dead, it would've finished her off the other night.

"Thank you." She whispered softly, the first tears of happiness coming to her eyes.

To her surprise, the Twilodon nodded slowly in response. *"You're welcome."* The voice echoed in her head again, this time seemingly coming from the Twilodon's direction.

"Is...is that voice comin' from ya?" She asked, slightly tense; this was getting more confusing by the moment.

"Yes." The voice echoed again, along with another, quicker nod from the beast. *"What you are hearing are my thoughts, which I am choosing to share with you; that ability is called Telepathy."*

"Te-le-pu-thee?" Applejack repeated, the farm pony stumbling over her own tongue in confusion. "Never he'rd of it." She frowned. "Who *are* ya?"

"My name is Savagera." The Twilodon told her, motioning to himself with his right paw. *"You may not know me, but perhaps you know an ally of mine; a purple dragon named Spyro."*

Applejack perked up in surprise. "Wait...ya know Spyro?" She asked...before it hit her. "Of course! *That's* why he asked me if he heard a voice! He *knew* ya were the one who attacked me last night!" She exclaimed softly, a stern frown over her features

Savagera looked away in what could've been guilt. Applejack saw this, her face fading into confusion...stern confusion. She knew that predators don't help their prey, and why would a monster like this bother helping a pony it knew would be his enemy from that day on.

"Why did ya heal me?" She asked, wanting an honest answer.

Savagera stared back with a stern glare of thought before answering in submission. *"After your brother saved you from the final blow, I detected Spyro's scent on your flesh; Spyro only passes his scent to creatures that are his allies, usually through those acts he calls 'hugs'...and that's when I realized my mistake. I had attacked an ally. That's why I spared you, and then later came here to heal the wounds I gave you; this isn't an attempt to acheive forgiveness, and I know you'll not give me any after what I've done; I made a mistake, and now I have corrected what I had done wrong. That's all to it."*

Applejack didn't say anything, unable to bring up any words to respond with. This was all very shocking for her, and even a little frightening; her view on her recent traumatization were being shredded and reformed repeatedly, the ferocious, predatory monster now proving to be a fellow being, who was as much as a victim to this misunderstanding as she was...and was apologizing for its actions.

Most ponies would probably ignore the request and still shunned the monster for its appearance and actions if they were in Applejack's place, and half of Applejack herself wanted to do just that...but she couldn't bring herself to; being the Element of Honesty meant she had a very wide view of life, always looking at all the different possiblities and options before jumping to a decision. This event was harder to just forgive and let go...but the mare who's heart and wisdom was as strong as her body found a way to do just that.

"Ta be truthful, part of me doesn't want to forgive..." She told him; he didn't seem to care though. "...but I'm gonna anyway." That made him look at her finally, a brief glimmer of surprise passing through his eyes. "Ya did do a-mite horrible things that night to me and my kin, but ya also could've continued bein' a monster and left me ta suffer in this here bed. But ya chose to come back and fix what ya did wrong...and that was mighty big of ya. I forgive ya, Savagera...and thanks again for helpin' me."

The big cat nodded again.

The sound of the door opening caught their attention, and they looked back to see Spyro entering the room, now as a dragon, closing the door behind him. "Are you okay, Applejack? I was coming to check on you but I-" He stopped when he saw Savagera, his face first one of surprise...then of aknowledgement. "I knew it was you." He stated flatly.

"Spyro, wait!" Applejack began. "He came here to-"

"It's okay, Applejack." Spyro reassured her as he approached them. "You did good, Savagera."

"I merely did what I knew was right." Savagera said in an almost non-caring tone. *"Nothing truly special about that."*

"Speak fer yerself." Applejack told him. "It's a mighty-big somethin' special to me."

The panther monster didn't say anything, but nodded once more in return.

Spyro looked thoughtful. "By the way, how did you get into this world to begin with?" He asked.

"I cannot say. I don't even remember what I was doing the day before I awoke here." The Twilodon told him.

"So you just living your normal like in Twilight Forest when you just woke up in the Equestria?"

"Yes. Luckily I was able to find food in this new world before I starved."

The purple dragon hummed in thought, rubbing his chin with his claw again. "Strange...first Princess Celestia agrees to take me in teaching with the Guardians of her world, and now my friend and fellow Skylander suddenly and magically arrives in this world...I think you're arrival here may be more than just a coincidence."

"What do ya mean?" Applejack asked.

"I'm not sure, but I think Princess Celestia's brought me here for more than just training." He told the earth pony. "Something that she hasn't told me about yet...I'll ask her the next time we meet; in the meantime, what to do with Savagera. If some magic force brought him here, then it did so with purpose, meaning he should stay."

"It ain't going to be that easy, Spyro." Applejack told him flatly. "Peaceful as we ponies are, a few of us won't be as forgivin' as I am. I can already name two ponies cravin' Savagera's head."

"If that's so, then how does Spyro live amongst you all without causing panic?" Savagera asked.

"Well, it's from a spell Twilight and I came up with that can turn me into a pony." Spyro explained, his own horns glowing with his new magic to prove his point. "But it was something that we could only do thanks to my dragon powers; I don't think you could do the

same...unless..." He suddenly perked up; Applejack could almost see the light-blub turn on over his head. "Give me some space, guys; I'm going to try something. It might not work, but it's worth a try."

Spyro took a few steps back, closing his eyes as he felt out the glowing fragments of his transformation magic in his body; there were at least three seperate shards of the purple kirin magic. Concentrating hard, he lit up his horns with magic and tried to grip one of these shards with it, the one located near his sterum; it worked, and he slowly began trying to remove it, tugging on it. It was slightly painful, like trying to remove a dagger or piece of stabbed-in metal from his body, but slowly and surely he inched it through his sterum and out of his chest.

Savagera and Applejack watched in surprise and amazement (at least Applejack did) as a patch on Spyro's chest began to glow with a purplish magic light similar to Twilight's magic. Soon what appeared to be a shard of sparkling purple crystal the size of a unicorn's horn merged from Spyro's flesh, the dragon grunting in pain as he slowly pulled it out completely.

Spyro sighed with relief as the pain stopped once the shard was completely out, and he took a moment to study it; even thought it was solid like a crystal, it seemed to pulse with magic, and seemed drawn back to his body like a magnet.

"Savagera, hold still. I'm going to give you one of my pony magic shards so you can change to. This may hurt a bit, but it won't last long." Spyro told him. The Twilodon did as told, standing perfectly still and strong.

The purple dragon then sent the crystal floating toward Savagera, approaching the cat from the right side. Then, being as gentle as he could, he began to insert the crystal into Savagera, a patch of the Twilodon's ribcage glowing as the shard began to absorb into the cat's body. The magic seemed to switch from Spyro to Savagera, aiding the dragon in inserting the crystal. Savagera growled softly in pain as it disappeared into his flesh, but stood strong none the less.

Soon, the shard fused itself into the monster, and he both dragon and fanged wyvern gave growling sighs of relief as the pain and stress faded.

"Ya okay, Spyro?" Applejack asked as she pushed the covers down; her fur was dirty and sticky from blood, and she didn't want to stay in the soaked bed any longer. She took a careful step out of bed, her tender ribs slightly tingling as her left-upper leg set against the ground.

"I'm fine." Spyro assured her.

"Now what do I do?" Savagera asked.

The purple dragon took a deep breath, letting his tired body relax and rest. "Focus your Shadow energy into the magic, until it grows strong enough to turn you into a pony." He told him.

Savagera nodded, closing his eyes as he focused his energy into the shard, which he felt located in his body. He began charging his power of darkness into the shard, making the magic

stronger and stronger...until suddenly his entire body lit up with the dark, ghostly purple light he normally generated from his stripes, a loud caterwaul roaring through the room as the light nearly blinded Applejack and Spyro.

Once the glare faded down, Spyro lowered his wing from his face...on which a grin of satisfaction formed. "I think it worked." He stated proudly.

Sweet Apple Acres, Next Morning:

The once eager and battle-ready ponies slept away in their trench, resting either in or on top of their sleeping bags that Pinkie Pie had pulled out for them. Despite the urgency of the situation, the toll of the day behind them had claimed the five girls and they each nodded off one-by-one. Rarity was the first to go, not used to being up past her usual bedtime. Fluttershy was too frightened to sleep at first, but soon gave in thanks to the protection of the lantern's glow and Spyro. Twilight was next, also not used to being up even this late. Pinkie Pie then nodded off herself, even the sugar-powered party pony losing the energy to stay awake. And finally Rainbow Dash, who kept herself awake in order to be there to watch the monster get what it deserved, soon exhausted herself to the point of collapse, snoring away peacefully in her sleeping bag.

Their slumber was interrupted by a monstrous roar that echoed through the orchard. All five mares screamed in alarm as they jumped ten feet in the air; from the outside it looked like the ground was bouncing about like a bunch of beachballs under a cloth. It was only after the tangled mess of cloth collasped onto itself did the screaming stop and the girls struggled underneath the blanket.

Twilight emerged first, poking her head out to see Spyro, as an kirin, standing before her and laughing hilariously.

"That's not funny, you big jerk!" She spat angrily. "We thought you were the monster for Celestia's sake!"

Spyro used his wing to wipe tears of laughter from his eyes. "Sorry, ladies. I couldn't resist." He told them. "Not when I'm in such a good mood."

Rainbow Dash emerged next, followed by Rarity, Fluttershy, and Pinkie Pie, the cyan pegasus looking even more pissed off than Twilight. "And just why are you in such a good mood?!" She snarled, her mane even more messy and frazzled than usual.

To answer that, Spyro stepped to the side and motioned to the orange mare standing behind him, who had the biggest grin of joy anyone had seen on her face. The moment Twilight and her friends saw her, the angry glares were immediately replaced with expressions of joy and disbelief.

"Applejack!"

"Hey, girls." Applejack said softly, obviously more than happy to be home. "Surprised?"

"That's putting it mildly!" Rarity exclaimed. "Look at you! Yesterday you were on death's doorstep, and now you're good as new!"

"What happened, Applejack?" Twilight asked in astonishment. "You could-" She paused, looking up at Spyro. "Did you heal her?" She asked.

Spyro shook his head with an honest smile. "No. That honor goes to a friend of mine." He told them, motioning behind him and Applejack. "Girls, this is Savagera, a friend from Prehistoria."

All six mares turned to see, with great surprise, another male kirin standing behind Spyro and Applejack; this one was even more like Nightmare Moon than Spyro was, standing a head taller than Spyro's pony form. His horn was straight and sharp, and his wings and tail were also like Spyro's griffin wings and dragon tail. His wings were ruffled and tattered, with blade-sharp feathers, while his mane was shaped like long spines growing backwards from his head and neck, the tuff of fur at the end of his tail also resembling a straight cluster of sharp blades. His ears were torn and tattered, and his dragon, slit pupil eyes also matched Spyro's, though were a darker, colder purple, matching the color of his sharp hooves. His fur was pitch-black in color, his chest and face scales being dark-purple, and he had dark purple zebra stripe patterns, matching those of the zebra Zecora, giving him a dark, mysterious appearance. His 'cutie' mark was that of a deadly-looking fang-shaped dagger crackling with purple lightning.

The five mares minus the orange earth pony were silent; Twilight especially, seemed extra stunned. "Ummmm..." The purple unicorn said, shaking her head to snap out of her stupor. "...H-H-Hello, Mr. 'Savagera'?"

"Greetings, young ones." Savagera stated, looking down at the smaller ponies with an aura of mystery and darkness about him. "So you are the one your alpha has chosen to train Spyro with Magic; Twilight Sparkle?"

"Uh, um, I..." Twilight stuttered; the very presence of this dark pony was slightly unnerving. "Y-Yes, if you mean Princess Celestia by 'Alpha'." She turned to Spyro. "Hmmm...you both had dragon eyes, griffion wings and dragon tails...and Savagera is a pony from Prehstoria, so Kirins must still live in the world of Prehistoria!"

Spyro frowned anxiously, knowing the fact that Savagera was not a pony to begin with. "I guess so..." He muttered half-heartedly. "I also have better news." He then said, looking to the Twilodon in disguise. "With Savagera's help, we were able to track down that Twilodon and put an end to its reign of terror! It won't bother any of you ponies ever again."

All five ponies burst out into cheer at this news, all engaging Applejack in a big group hug, finally relieved that was threat was 'dealt with'; as they squealed and giggling together, Applejack sent

a playful wink at Spyro and Savagera, the former winking back while the latter merely nodded in return, a soft smile adorning his face.

"Dear Princess Celestia

I learned last night that forgiveness can always come if yer willin' to let go. Sometimes things that someone does to ya may be so horrible that it's hard to find the strength to let go and forgive them, but if that someone is truly sorry for what they did, and is willing to do what it takes to gain repentance, then anythin' is forgivable.

Yours truly, Applejack."

Just as the girls were breaking apart their group hug, the front doors of the farm house nearby opened up and from it Big Macintosh, Applebloom, and Granny Smith emerged, wondering what the racket was about...but once they saw Applejack, fully healed and back home, their faces lit up like the sun itself.

"AJ!" Big Macintosh yelled as he barreled toward his younger sister...only for the ground to give way and for him to plummet into the earth below with a cry of surprise.

CRASH!

The eight ponies stared at the cloud of dust rising from the hole in the ground, a pain-filled groan emerging from it as well...before Spyro merely grinned proudly.

"See? I told you those Pit Traps work." He told Rainbow Dash, who merely huffed in aggravation.

6. AppleBuck Season

CHAPTER V: APPLEBUCK SEASON

PonyVille, a full after the attack of the Twilodon:

"STAMPEEEEEDE!"

It was Rainbow Dash's voice that woke up Spyro just before the earth-shaking vibrations threw him out of bed; the entire village was shaking under an impact-induced earthquake, the interior of the library nearly falling apart on itself, books falling off the shelf and all of Twilight's belongs joining the books on the floor.

"What the heck is going on?!" The purple dragon asked in alarm.

He flew out of the upper story window, still in dragon form, to see PonyVille once more in chaos, the ponies themselves once more running about like headless chickens while screaming in panic...but this time he could see a real cause: coming up over the distant hill leading to Sweet Apple Acres was a huge herd of stampeding cows heading straight for PonyVille. It was this stampede that was causing the earthquake. As they grew closer, the shaking of the entire town grew stronger.

"HhHeEeYyY!" Pinkie Pie, the only one not panicking, said, grabbing Spyro's attention with the strangeness in her voice. TtTtHhHhIiIiSsSs mMmMaAaAkKkeEesS MmMyY VvVoOoiIicCcCEeEe SsSoOouUunNndDd sSsiIilLlLlLyYy!" She giggled, her voice reverberated from the quaking.

"Pinky Pie, are you crazy?" Twilight nearly screamed. "RUN!"

"Every pony calm down, there is no need to panic!" The mayor tried to assure everyone, though no hardly anyone heard her over the stampede and the screams.

"But, mayor! Whatever shall we do?" Rarity asked in the typical dramatic fashion.

"Look there!" Rainbow Dash suddenly cried, pointing across the river to where the large stampede of cows were rushing towards the town.

"YEEEHAW!" Applejack cried as she and a brown-and-white collie dog half her size came running up alongside the herd. When the ponies saw her, they began cheering for her. Applejack shouted a few commands to her dog and soon they began rounding them up and forcing them into a straight and narrow line.

"This is the best rodeo show I've ever seen!" Pinkie Pie said, stuffing her face into a bag of popcorn. Twilight rolled her eyes at the sight.

Applejack then pushed some of the cows to the side, jumped on one of them, and from that ones back lassoed the cow at the front of the herd. She then pulled hard on the rope and changed their direction to run along the river instead, all while cheering on. The ponies cheered once again.

Spyro took to the skies and flew over to where Applejack pulled on the rope until the stampede came to a complete stop.

"You alright, AJ?" He asked in concern as he landed next to her.

"Hoo-Wee! As fine as a fresh apple pie on a sunday mornin'." The farm pony told him, throwing her rope to the side and approaching a brown-spotted cow. "Now what was *that* all about?" She asked the cow.

The cow mooed in response, before blinking in surprise and clearing her throat. "Ooh my, begging your pardon Applejack..." She said in a normal voice. "...But Mooyella here saw one of those nasty snakes..."

All the cows shuddered at the very word.

"...and it gaves us all the willies, don't ya know?"

"I completely understand." Applejack told her. "Just next time, try and steer clear of Ponyville."

"We certainly will, Applejack." The brown cow told her as the herd began heading back to the herding fields. "So long, Winona!" She said cheerfully to the collie, who barked happily in response.

Spyro watched the cows go before turning to Applejack. "So, how are the ribs doing?" He asked.

Applejack grinned at him, moving her left arm to prove their strength. "Fine and dandy." She told him. "Though Big Mac's are still bruised from that fall into that Pit Trap of yers."

The purple dragon grinned sheepishly. "Yeah, I still haven't found all of them yet." He admitted, recalling a few times the Apple Family members fell into said pit traps hidden throughout Sweet Apple Acres. "Saverga and I ate all those dead animals that marked their locations."

"Yeah, I noticed." Applejack stated flatly. "The Cutie Mark Crusaders discovered one next to their treehouse the hard way." She then turned away. "Well, I've gotta get back to the farm; see ya, Spyro!"

"Bye, AJ." Spyro told her as he took off into the sky; he flew back to PonyVille just in time to see and hear the ponies all cheering for Applejack as she galloped dramatically into the sunset cowboy style...wait...it was morning; where did that sunset come from?!

"Yee haw! Ride 'em, cowpony!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed while trying to be like Applejack, though utterly failing at it. Spyro sighed and walked over to where Madame Mayor, Twilight, and Rarity stood.

The Mayor seemed extra relieved for the safety of her town. "Applejack was just... just..."

"APPLE-TASTIC!" Pinky Pie finished for her, hanging upside down from Spyro's snout; the dragon promptly snorted her off, causing her to fall headfirst to the ground.

"Exactly!" Madame Mayor agreed. "We must do something to thank Applejack for single-hoofedly saving the town."

"I know..." Pinkie Pie began, not at all fazed by her fall. "A PARTY!" Soon the whole town began getting the festivities ready.

Twilight turned to Spyro. "Hey Spyro...did the stampede wake you up?" She asked.

"What do you think?" Spyro groaned, rubbing his head.

"Good thing we have Applejack here, Huh?" Twilight said with a smile.

"Yeah..." The dragon tiredly agreed. "So, Pinkie Pie's throwing another party?"

"Yep! Want to help?"

"Why not?"

"Alright; you can help Rarity and I put up streamers. Is that okay?" Twilight asked.

"No problem." Spyro stated, his form bursting into purple flames as he assumed kirin form.

"Okay! Let's get started!" The purple unicorn said cheerfully. Twilight retrieved a part of streamers from Pinkie Pie and Rarity and the two purple ponies started placing them up together as the other ponies began decorating the main square with party supplies.

A lot had happened since Savagera arrived in Equestria; the Twilodon still kept his true identity secret from everyone except Spyro and Applejack, but decided to live in the EverFree Forest anyway, saying that it was only place that felt like home to him (and where he could assume his normal form as much as possible!); most of the girls didn't like that idea, but didn't disagree on it, especially since all of them were a little frightened of this new pony dark appearance.

Not much had happened with Spyro magic training; under instruction from Princess Celestia, Twilight taught Spyro how to perfect his levitation ability and had begun teaching him how to teleport...though that hadn't been coming along well.

Teleporting was much harder than it looked. The trick was you had to stay focused on the point you wanted to appear at, and that meant *really* focused: as in, you can't let any other thought dominate your mind until the spell is over, otherwise you'll end up in some pretty random places. For Spyro, this was a bit difficult; despite his skills with staying focused in important times, he could get distracted at the drop of a hat and trying to clear his mind almost never worked. This led to many instances with him appearing in places he didn't want to be, such as ten thousand feet up in the air.

He had been focusing (trying to anyway) and Rainbow Dash suddenly popped into his mind right when he released his magic. Maybe the magic associated her with flying...for all he know after the usual dark flash (which resembled a burst of dark purple flames instead of Twilight's sparkly flash of white light), he was way higher above PonyVille then he was supposed to be. Thank the ancestors he had wings, otherwise he'd be lacking a skeletal system right about now.

That was the first of many bizzare places Spyro wounded up teleporting too: halfway through a tree (did *NOT* feel good!), deep in an underground cavern (Just *had* to be one full of giant

scorpions!), in Princess Luna's personal quarters in Canterlot's Castle (***"WHAT TIS THE MEANING OF THY INTRUSION?!"***), etc. etc. etc. It was after teleporting into the mouth of an Ursa Major when Spyro decided to give up teleporting until further notice, or until he could get Sunburn's advice on teleporting, the Phoenix Dragon having *much* more experience than he did. On all instances, he was able to either teleport back immediately or enlist help from Twilight or the other unicorns ("Sorry, Luna, for teleporting into your room while you were bathing, despite the fact you ponies wear no clothes at all to begin with."), so none of them were life-threatening...though Luna promised him death by her Royal Canterlot Voice if he ever walked in on her naked ever again; Spyro asked what the difference was since she didn't wear any true clothing anyway, but she glared him down with eyes that could put a cockatrice to shame until he agreed and teleported away.

Spyro chuckled as he remembered the princess's face when he suddenly appeared in her bathroom while she was scrubbing herself down, as he helped Twilight hang up the last bits of the streamers. When Twilight asked him what was funny, he merely chuckled and told her not to worry about it.

When they finished, Twilight and Spyro walked over to Rarity, who had just finished placing the last bow.

"We all ready?" Twilight asked.

"Just one last thing..." Rarity told her, her own horn glowing with a light-blue magic. She levitated a banner decorated with Applejack's symbols with her magic and placed it on top of a building. "*Now* we're ready."

"Is Applejack all set?"

"Actually..." Rainbow Dash said as she flew over. "...apart from the stampede, I haven't seen her all week."

"Not since that meanie-mean-monster-pants twilight cat attacked her." Pinkie Pie added.

"But she'll be here for sure!" Rainbow Dash said confidently. "Applejack is *never* late!"

"We'll see about *that*." A new voice spoke up, causing the girls to jump in fright as Savagera approached them, looking about the town square. "Interesting decorations. What's the occasion?"

"Just thanking Applejack for saving us from a stampede of cattle earlier today." Twilight told him carefully; for some reason she just couldn't feel comfortable in his presence, especially since he resembled a certain Mare of Darkness that nearly damned Equestria to Eternal Night. Luckily he wasn't as intimidating during the day as he was at night.

Savagera didn't seem impressed, but accepted it none the less.

Moments later, everyone gathered up in front of a podium, the chatter of the crowd dying down as Twilight came up on the stage and used her magic to grab and sort a large stack index cards she was to use for the speech. Spyro, Savagera, Rarity, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, and Spike here standing near the front of the crowd, waiting for Twilight to begin. Standing next to the podium was a large golden trophy that represented a blue ribbon at the base and a small statue of a reared-up pony on top, which was Applejack's award for helping the town.

"Welcome everypony!" Twilight announced, reading from the first index card. "Today we are here to honor a pony we can always count on to help in matters great and small." She put the first one at the bottom of the stack and lifting up the next card. "A pony whose contributions to-"

"Did you see Applejack's slick moves out there? WHAT an *ATHLETE*!" Rainbow Dash suddenly exclaimed as she flew in from the side, scattering Twilight's cards and surprising the unicorn girl. "This week she's gonna help me with my new flying trick, and I know it's gonna be so *AWESOME*!" The rainbow-maned pegasus squealed.

"EXACTLY!" Twilight said, showing Rainbow Dash off the stage and lifting her cards back up. "And-"

She lost to Pinkie Pie now, who popped up from behind the podium. "This week, I get to run SugarCube Corner for the first time!" She announced.

"...What does that have to do with Applejack?" Twilight asked in confusion.

Pinkie Pie blinked. "OH! Applejack, one of the best bakers *EVER*, is gonna help me. Applejack makes everything great, so free samples for everypony!" She told everyone, earning an excited cheer from the crowd.

"Okay, that's great." Twilight said sarcastically as she pushed Pinkie Pie out of the way. "Now if I could just make a point without being inter-"

"Twilight...?" Fluttershy asked softly as she slowly creep up onto the stage.

"-rupted!" Twilight growled, promptly dropping her stack of cards.

Fluttershy took the podium. "Twilight, I'm so sorry, but I just wanted to mention that Applejack is also helping me this week with the official bunny census, where we count up all the new baby bunnies that were born this season. She's gonna help gather them using her wonderful herding skills." She said softly...before noticing the annoyed look on Twilight's face and slowly backed out.

"Anyone else...? *Anyone*...?" Twilight announced, but silence replied to her. "No? Well then, as I was *trying* to say..." Twilight noticed the mayor excitedly waiting to take the podium. "UGH! Never mind!" She threw her index cards all over the place, storming down to where Spyro and

the others were standing as the mayor was about to give her next speech. The purple unicorn had her arms crossed and an annoyed face.

"Sorry about that..." Spyro stated, though he was grinning.

The mayor took the stand and announced, "Ah-ahem! And so, with no further ado, it is my privilege to give the prize, Pony of Ponyville Award, to our beloved guest of honor, a pony of the utmost trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity. Ponyville's most capable and dependable friend: Applejack!" The mayor pointed to the curtain that just opened while every pony cheered.

Applejack wasn't there.

Everyone gasped...except Spike and Savagera, the latter not really caring and the former not noticing. "Cool! Way to go Applejack, that was awesome! I mean- heh." The baby dragon's cheer died down, and he grimaced in embarrassment.

The silence was bone crushing.

"Awkward..." Spike stated.

"I'M HERE!" Applejack suddenly came She was walking towards the trophy with saddle-baskets full of apples, which at the same time fell one by one as she bumped in to every pony. "I'm here!" She yawned and continued talking. "Sorry I'm late-whoa-I was just...Wha-ha! Did I get yer tail?" She stumbled through the crowd before making her way over to the stand and taking control; she looked as if she hadn't gotten any sleep in days.

"Miss Mayor. Thank you kindly for this here... award thingy." The orange mare in a slightly disoriented tone, continuing to yawn. "It's so bright and shiny...and, heh...heh-heh, I sure do look funny, heh. Wooooo...wooooo..." She said as she made silly gestures at her reflecting in the trophy. Pinkie Pie joined her in the awkward situation.

Regardless, Twilight walked up to the stage. "Okay...?" The unicorn said in a disturbed tone. "Well, thank you Applejack for saving us from that scary stampede, and always being there for every pony." She said sincerly.

Applejack yawned loudly again. "Yeah...I like helpin' the pony folks and..." She yawned once again... "...and stuff..." For a few seconds she fell asleep, in which time Twilight gave Spyro a confused look, the purple kirin merely shrugging in response. Applejack suddenly snapped awake. "Oh, uh, yeah. Uh, Thanks!"

Applejack then grabbed the trophy with her teeth and dragged it all the way back where she came from; the slow dragging through the dirt seemed to ring out through the silence, everyone remaining silent until Applejack and the dragging disappeared to Sweet Apple Acres.

It was silent for a moment afterward until Twilight finally spoke. "Was it just me, or did Applejack seem a little-"

"Tired?" Rainbow Dash offered.

"Dizzy?" Fluttershy added.

"Messy?" Rarity said. They all looked at her awkwardly. "Well! Did you *see* her mane?"

"She seemed fine to me! Whoo! Whoo!" Pinkie pie offered cheerfully. Twilight, however, merely hummed in thought, cocking an eyebrow in suspicion.

"She hasn't had any sleep for days, that's what her problem is." Savagera stated flatly. "I can tell from her condition alone."

"Yeah, I noticed she looked slightly tired when I spoke to her after the stampede." Spyro said. "But why is she staying awake to begin with?"

Twilight nodded. "We better go find out before anything gets worse." She told them all. "C'mon, Spyro."

Spyro nodded and followed her; he guess they were the only ones going to check up on her.

Sweet Apple Acres, Orchard:

When Twilight and Spyro arrived to her farm, they found Applejack bucking apple trees for the apples to fall down into the buckets below. However, she was having trouble trying to stay awake; from the lack of sleep, she wasn't concentrating right on her duties. First she stood a little too far from the tree and nearly tripped herself kicking too far away. Next she stumbled to the side and accidently kick over a bucket of apples, groaning in response.

"What on earth is that pony doing?" Twilight asked.

"It's the lack of sleep; she can't concentrate on anything." Spyro responded.

Twilight nodded. "Hey! Applejack!" Applejack, however, had fallen asleep again. "Applejack!" Twilight called again. Applejack still didn't budge. "Applejack!" No Answer. Twilight used her magic to teleport right in front of Applejack. "APPLEJACK!" She screamed.

Applejack finally woke up in surprise and shook her head to wake herself up. "Oh, howdy Twah'light." Applejack greeted. She noticed Spyro standing near her. "Howdy, Spyro."

"What *is* all this?" Twilight asked, looking about at all the buckets and apples beneath all the trees nearby.

"It's Applebuck season." Applejack explained as she headed toward another tree

Twilight teleported in front of Applejack again just as the farm pony finished kicking another tree, causing more apples to fall to their buckets. "Applewhat Season?" Twilight asked in confusion. Spyro kept up with them if they started to move around.

"It's what the Apple family calls harvestin' time." Applejack told her as she continued walking toward the unbucked trees. "We gather all the apples from the trees so we can sell 'em."

"But, why are you doing it all alone?" Twilight asked.

"'Cause Big Macintosh hurt himself fallin' into Spyro's Pit Trap."

Twilight teleported in front of Applejack again. "What about all those relatives I've met when I first came to Ponyville? Can't they help?" She asked.

Applejack sighed as walked around Twilight. "They were just here for the Summer Sun Celebration. They actually live all over Equestria and are busy harvestin' their own orchards. So, uh, I'm on my own." Twilight teleported in front of Applejack again, but didn't budge this time. "Which *means* I should really get back to work..." Twilight stood her ground. Applejack tried to persuade her. "...Ahem...'hint hint'...? 'Get back to work'?"

"Fine..." The unicorn stated as she moved out of the way.

"Could you step aside, Twah'light?" Applejack asked, slowly wobbling left and right dizzily.

"I just did." Twilight stated, earning a surprised disoriented look from Applejack. "Applejack, you don't look so good."

The earth pony shook her head to wake up again. "Eh, don't any a' you three worry none, I'm just fine and dandy." Applejack said as she bucked at another tree, missing with with a tired 'Whoah!'.

Twilight teleported in front of her once again. "Do you want some help?" She offered.

"Help?!" Applejack said in angry surprise. "No way, no how!"

"But there's no way you can do it all on your own." Twilight objected.

"Is that a *challenge*?" Applejack asked aggressively, glaring the poor unicorn down.

"Uhm...no?"

"Well, I'm gonna prove ta you that I can do it! Now if you'll *excuse* me, I've got apples to buck." Applejack said as she walked away from them.

"Any ideas?" Twilight asked Spyro hopefully.

"I could try to talk some sense into her..." Spyro offered. "But I doubt it'll make any difference..."

"Better than nothing...you should go try. Maybe she'll listen to you." She told him. The purple kirin nodded and walked over to Applejack, who was still bucking trees. She noticed him and huffed angrily.

"I told Twilight that I need t' work!" She told him.

"Yeah, I know." Spyro stated flatly. "...but you haven't slept at all, have you?"

"No, sir. I've been workin' nonstop...since the last time I...uh...went to sleep." She said tiredly, her legs slightly wobbling.

"You need to rest, Applejack." Spyro told her. "Why don't you let Twilight and I help you out for just a bit, while you go get some sleep. Then you can come back when you feel better?"

"I said...I don't want any help!" Applejack stubbornly snapped as she began walking away.

"Applejack..." Spyro began, but Applejack just flat-out ignored him and continued to buck trees, missing a lot of them. Spyro merely snorted smoke from his nostrils and turned away, leaving the mare to her work.

"No luck?" Twilight asked as she rejoined him. Spyro merely shook his head.

Twilight sighed. "We should get back to town; I don't think we can do anything else to help." She stated.

"Very Well."

PonyVille Library, an hour later:

"Man, am I glad *that's* over!" Spyro, now as a dragon again, exclaimed as he collapsed onto his stomach, the library once more cleaned up and organized to perfection; the last hour was spent cleaning up the mess that the earthquake from the stampede had left, both Spyro and Spike driven to exhaustion. Twilight had help a bit...by directing them where to put everything and making sure they didn't slack off.

"Welcome to my life, bro." Spike stated, sitting down with a plop with the mop still clutched in his hand. "I have to do this nearly everyday, usually whenever Twilight starts some big scientific research thing of hers."

"Oh, ha-ha-ha." Twilight laughed sarcastically as she entered the room, carrying a carton of ice-cool water and a pair of cups for her dragons (if you could Spyro's a cup and not a small barrel). "I *do* appreciate the help though, guys. I'm just glad nothing was damaged during the stampede." She said, pouring the water into the cups and then levitating them over to them.

Spyro took a grateful swig of his cup, sighing in relief afterwards. "Herbivores are such scary-cats." He stated. "They see one little snake and it's the end of the world!"

"Hey! I'm not like that!" Twilight stated, offended.

Spike chuckled. "Oh yeah? And who panicked at the sight of snakes during Winter Wrap Up?" He asked, earning a deathly glare from Twilight. "I didn't even know hoofed animals could climb trees!"

"Very funny, 'Apron Dragon'." Twilight sneered back, earning a blush from Spike. She then levitated the Encyclopedia of Prehistorian Monsters, with some difficulty, and rested it on her back. "I'll be reading on the balcony if anyone needs me." She stated.

"I think I'll join you." Spyro stated, eyeing a large book on the nearby shelf: Legends and History of Equestria. "I could catch up on this world's history and knowledge myself."

And that's how the two found themselves out on the balcony, enjoying the weather and a good book at the same time. Twilight was currently sitting in the middle of the balcony, laying on her stomach with her legs tuck in a horse-like fashion under her body, her head held up as her eyes washed over the book of knowledge and monsters set up before her. Spyro was sitting up against the back of the railing, leaning causally against it with his hind legs crossed and his wings wrapped behind his head in the lounging position, his tail occasionally twitching as if having a life of its own.

Twilight soon found the twitching tail distracting; she tried to ignore it, but it the tapping it was making begain to annoy her as well. "Do you *have* to do that?" She asked finally.

"Do what?" Spyro asked, looking up from his book.

"That twitchy tail thing." She stated, pointing to the appendange in question. "It's starting to bother me."

Spyro grinned. "Sorry, bad habit." He told her. "But why do you care? What's wrong; afraid something gonna fall from the sky?" He asked with a chuckle.

"YAAAAAAAAAAHH!"

CRASH!

"OW!" The purple dragon yelled as a large, blue, feathery object came crashing down onto his head. Twilight leapt nearly ten feet into the air, screaming in surprise, only to land to see an amusing, if slightly embarrassing sight. Rainbow Dash had crashed-landed on top of Spyro's head, the dragon sitting there with the pegasus draped over his face like a blanket, her legs hanging over the sides of his snout and head, and her tail hanging over the back of his head like a rainbow-colored mullet and her mane over the front of his face like a mustache.

"Can I help you?" Twilight asked awkwardly, though she was smiling slightly.

Rainbow Dash lifted her face from in between Spyro's nostrils. "I think somepony else needs your help." She groaned.

"Applejack?" Twilight asked, as if knowing it.

"Yep." Rainbow Dash flatly stated, groaning as she went limb.

"I'd *hate* to interrupt this conversation." Spyro stated, pausing to blow Rainbow Dash's mane off his nose. "But I'd appreciate it if Rainbow would get her backside outta my face." Due to the position she was in, Rainbow Dash's hindquarters were draped directly over Spyro's eyes, giving the dragon a perfect close-up view of everything in between her hind legs.

Rainbow Dash's weariness faded immediately when she saw what he was referring too, the pegasus shrieking as she bolted off Spyro's face. She then whirled on the purple dragon with red cheeks and eyes, the cheeks from embarrassment and the eyes from anger.

"You Perverted Reptile!" She snarled angrily, flushed red. "I know dragons are bad, but I didn't know they had *those* kinds of issues!"

"*Me*?!" Spyro asked in surprise and anger. "I'm not the one throwing myself onto the first male they find! At least now I know that you really *are* a girl." He said with an evil grin.

"WHAT THE HELL IS *THAT* SUPPOSE TO MEAN?!" Rainbow Dash screamed in fury.

"Guys! Stop!" Twilight shouted over their argument, surprisingly getting their attention. "Come on, Rainbow, give him a break. It was an accident; it wasn't like you gave the poor guy a chance before you crash-landed on top of him."

"What happened, anyway?" Spyro asked.

Rainbow Dash took a moment to push her temper and humiliation down, glaring slightly at the dragon while standing weird. "You guys know that flying trick I was talking about earlier?" She asked, to which they nodded. "Well, I was trying to do that but AJ wasn't cooperating; she seemed awful tired for some reason."

Twilight narrowed her eyes in thought...before abruptly standing up. "Come on, Spyro. Let's see if we can talk some sense into Applejack again." She told him, heading toward the door.

"Okay, but I doubt it'll have any effect." He stated as he got up, trodding past Rainbow Dash carefully; the cyan pegasus was still slightly blushing as she glared at him, uncomfortably grinding her hind legs together. He merely smirked at her, earning a angry growl from her as he left the treehouse, staying in dragon form as he followed Twilight to the valley of the apple trees.

Sweet Apple Acres:

When they arrived at Sweet Apple Acres again, they found Applejack was back to harvesting the apple trees again, but seemed even more disoriented than before; she bucked the nearby tree to make the apples fall to the earth, leaning down to pick one up in her teeth. However, she hit the back of her head on a tree branch as she lifted it back up, causing her to cry out in pain and vibrate from the impact.

"Applejack, can we talk?" Twilight asked, earning the earth pony's attention. Applejack ears twitched and she stood silent for a moment, stretching her ears forward as if trying hard to listen. Spyro guessed the impact left her ears ringing.

"CAN BEES SQUAWK? I DON'T THINK SO!" Applejack yelled loudly.

"No! Can we TALK?" Twilight asked again.

"TWENTY STALKS? BEAN OR CELERY?"

"*NO*! I need to TALK to YOU!"

"YOU NEED TO WALK TO THE ZOO? WELL, WHO'S STOPPING YOU?"

"I NEED to TALK to YOU!"

"OH! WELL WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO? WHAT YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT?"

"Rainbow Dash dropped in to see me today!"

"THAT'S QUITE NEIGHBORLY OF HER!"

"Yes, except that she crashed onto Spyro's face after YOU launched her into the air!" Twilight stated flatly, blushing slightly at the rather awkward memory.

Applejack finally lowered her voice, looking both exhausted and ashamed. "Oh, yeah. I wasn't feeling quite myself this morning."

"Because you're *working too hard* and *you need help*!" Twilight stressed emphasis.

"WHAT? KELP? I don't need kelp. I don't even like seaweed." Applejack said in disgust.

"HELP! YOU NEED HELP!" Twilight screamed into her face.

"Nothin' doin', Twah'light. I'm gonna prove to you...to everypony, that I can do this *on my own*!" She insisted as she began to walk away, but ran herself into the same tree branch from before. "Ow! Now if you'll EXCUSE me, I've gotta go help Pinkie Pie!" She said as she stumbled away as if drunk.

"Uuhhhhh!" Twilight sighed, sounding frustrated enough.

Spyro sighed himself, shaking his head. "Twilight, maybe you should go rest, yourself. I can try to keep talking her out of working so hard." He told her.

"Thanks for the offer, Spyro...but I can't rest until I know she stops working..." Twilight said softly.

"What do you suppose we do?" He asked.

"I have no clue... but we better think of something soon..."

PonyVille:

Spyro and Twilight had just gotten back to PonyVille when Spike came running up to them, shouting in panic. "TWILIGHT! SPYRO!"

"Spike? What is it?" Twilight asked in concern.

"There are a bunch of ponies sick down at the clinic!"

From that, all three raced down to a makeshift hospital made of a giant blue tent; the opening of the tent was pulled back by a white pony with sliver-blue eyes and a light-red/pink mane tied back in a nurse-styled bun, her tail hanging normally. She wore a nurse's white hat with a red cross symbol that matched her cutie mark.

"We came as soon as we heard." Twilight told her.

The nurse, whom Twilight knew as Nurse TenderHeart, sighed in partial relief. "Oh, thank you, Twilight. We need all the help we can get." She said, motioning to the scene inside.

It was a painful scene: ponies were either lying about in beds or on blankets on the floor, looking poisoned. Their faces were all green, and a few of them were regurgitating their lunches into buckets, all of them groaning in pain.

"Oh no! What happened?" Twilight asked.

"It was a mishap of the baked goods." Nurse TenderHeart explained.

Spyro's attention was turned to a bunch of muffins lying about the floor nearby; the outsides looked yummy and delicious, the insides were a disgusting dark teal-green in color. Spyro even saw an earthworm emerged from one Spike had picked up and sniffed. Spyro bent down and smelled one himself; his carnivorous sense of smell was probably the reason why it smelled good to him, but by smelling it he detected potato chips, root beer, lemon juice, and earthworms mixed into the batch.

"No... not baked goods..." Pinkie Pie, who was among the sick ponies in the beds, groaned. "...Baked bads!" She then burped, looking like she was about to barf.

"Applejack..." Twilight growled. She was about to say something to Spyro, but found to her disgust that both he and Spike were eating the bad muffins that made the ponies sick...and enjoying them.

"Mmm! Want one?" Spike asked with his mouth full, offering one to Twilight

"Eww! Spike! Get that away from me!" Twilight squealed. "How can you two stand that?!"

"We're dragons, remember?" Spyro asked, swallowing his bite. "These muffins aren't half-bad to us."

"We have to go stop Applejack; her exhaustion is now hurting other ponies than herself!" Twilight told Spyro, using her magic to push the muffins away from the purple dragon, allowing Spike to stuff himself.

Spyro nodded and the purple dragon and purple unicorn raced toward Sweet Apple Acres...*again*...

Sweet Apple Acres:

Once more the purple duo found themselves at Sweet Apple Acres, this time to find Applejack hanging upside down from the harness of an tip-sided cart she was using to load apples into a large bucket, the mare fast asleep.

"Applejack, we need to talk." Twilight said she and Spyro approached her.

"Wha! huh?!" Applejack said in a jolt awakening, before calming down. "Oh, it's you, Twah'light. I know what yer gonna say, but the answer is still no." She said while yawning; she looked even worse than before.

"Not to upset your applecart, but you *need help*." Twilight said, glancing oddly at the tipped cart.

"Hardy Har..." Applejack yawned as she struggled with her own situation, flaling her legs in an attempt to lower herself. "No, I don't."

"Here, let us help." Twilight offered.

"Help? *No thanks*." She continued to struggle with the cart, she and the cart making all sorts of bizzare noises in the process. Spyro and Twilight gave each other half-exasperated glances before looking back at Applejack. "A little more...little...there." She managed to get herself unstuck, now standing next to a tree. "I'll prove that this apple can handle THESE apples. Come

on apples..." She continued to kick the tree, but nothing came down. "FALL OFF!" She yelled as she beat the tree with both back hooves.

"AJ, I think you're beating a dead...tree."

They all looked up and noticed that all the branches on the tree were bare.

"I knew that..." Applejack stated before she continued walking, forcing Twilight and Spyro to follow her.

"Actually Applejack..." Twilight began. "I had something else to talk to you about. We just came back from PonyVille Urgent Care and-"

"Ya know, I'm a little busy to get lectured right now, Twah'light." Applejack interrupted sternly.

"But if you'd just let us help-"

"*UGH*!" Applejack groaned, looking back angrily. "No, NO, NO! How many times do I gotta say it? *I don't need no help from no pony*!"

"Ugh. That pony is stubborn as a mule." Twilight told me.

"That's putting it mildly." Spyro muttered. They heard something behind them and caused them to turn around.

"No offense." Twilight told the mule.

"None taken." The mule replied.

"So what's the plan now?" Spyro asked, tired.

Twilight sighed. "Well, I guess I'll take you up on the offer, Spyro, I don't think I can take anymore of this..."

Spyro nodded, a stern glare on his face. "I'll tolerate this one last time, but should another 'accident' happen, Applejack is 'getting help' whether she wants it or not! Even if he have to tie her to the bed!"

"I officially agree." Twilight stated as they, once again, headed back to town.

PonyVille, a few hours later:

The next couple hours were spent rather peacefully; Twilight offered to take Spyro to lunch, seeing that neither of them had eaten much that day with all the commotion; she took the purple dragon to her favorite restaurant, where she ordered an extra large pizza. She told him that she

chose pizza because her research concluded that pizza was a favorite food for males. Spyro normally would've argued the whole 'boy-girl' thing, but decided to agree this time, seeing how she was right; pizza was his favorite human food, he and the whole Skylanders gang having a regular pizza night every week...on which Boom Shroom was always absent.

Twilight had ordered buttercup petals for her topping, where Spyro chose rubies; he may had been able to assume pony form, but he still had yet to bring himself to eat most of the plant matter ponies would eat, having lived off of fruit, eggs, and sweets from SugarCube Corner during his whole stay. It turned out Spyro could eat gems like Spike could, and found them delicious; he couldn't exactly describe how they tasted, because there's no organic food that could compare with eating precious stones. It did feel like he was chewing a giant sugar crystal, though, his mighty jaws making quick work of the normally indestructible rocks.

Once their bellies were full (Twilight had only eaten two pieces, which were super large thanks to the pizza size, whereas Spyro polished off the rest of it), and were heading back to the library, when Twilight halted and gasped at the sight of three familiar mares lying on the ground, appearing to be dead, until they awoke.

"The horror, the *horror*!" Roseluck wailed.

"It was *awful*!" Lily exclaimed.

"A disaster! A horrible, *horrible* disaster!" Daisy said in terror; Twilight and Spyro looked about the street to see everything was...perfectly normal; sure the street was absent of the usual pony population, but nothing seemed out of place besides that.

"I don't get it..." Twilight finally said.

"Our gardens, destroyed!" Lily explained.

"Every last flower, devoured!" Roseluck told them.

" By...by...*THEM*!" Daisy screamed, pointing to what was probably the most bizzare sight Spyro had seen since arriving in Equestria.

A huge herd of bouncing baby bunnies, at least fifty, were covering the main garden area, bouncing about and devouring every bit of vegetable and low-lying plant life in the area. In the middle of it all was a very flustered Fluttershy, who was going about trying to keep the bunnies under control, but was utterly failing at it. "Oh my. Oh- Please stop, little bunnies. Oh no! Please, let's go home. Oh, oh, oh my goodness!" The creamy pegasus stammered as she scampered about, looking like a pony trying to corral water in the ocean.

That was the final straw. "Alright. Enough is *enough*!"

Sweet Apple Acres:

Twilight and Spyro raced back for the last time to Sweet Apple Acres to see her bucking one last tree up on the hill; she was now clearly on the verge of collapse, gasping for breath between each word she spoke. "Must...keep...buckin'...Just...a few...more..." She gasped, weakly bucking at the tree. "...must finish...harvestin'..."

"Alright, Applejack! Your applebucking hasn't just caused *you* problems, it's over-propelled Pegasus', practically poisoned plenty of ponies, and terrorized bushels of brand new bouncing baby bunnies!" Twilight told her sternly. "I don't care what you say, you. Need. Help!"

As if in defiance, Applejack gave the tree one last kick, causing apples to fall in her basket. "Ha! No I don't. Look, I did it!" She announced, showing Twilight and Spyro the entire orchard of the nearby hill completely picked of apples. "I harvested the entire Sweet Apple Acres *without* your help! How d'ya like *them* apples?"

"Is that so?" Savagera asked, leaning against the tree causally in an upright, human-like stance, arms folded against his chest. Twilight felt her skin crawl; he wasn't there just a second ago...

"Then you would probably like *those* apples." The black kirin stated, motioning to the hills to the right of the first one; the trees on that hill and on hills beyond were still full of fruit. "You've only harvested a *third* of the entire territory."

Applejack could only stare dumbfounded at the untouched trees, eyes wide as she began to mumble. "Only a third...E, go manta...in ima pony...?" She murmured, her eyes spinning slightly and her body swaying... "...aaaaaaahhhh." ...until her eyes rolled back and she finally collapsed onto her back from exhaustion.

"Applejack? Applejack!" Twilight called, now standing above her fallen friend, her head parallel to Applejack's but upside down.

"Huh?" Applejack asked as she opened her eyes, now too tired to stand up.

"Oh, good, you're okay." Twilight said in relief, before frowning sternly. "Now Applejack, I *completely* respect the Apple family ways. You're always there to help any pony in need, so maybe you can put a little of your stubborn pride aside and allow your friends to help you."

Applejack stared at Twilight and the two kirins before turning to look at the remaining fruit. Even she couldn't deny it; she couldn't even roll over to attempt to stand back up, and there were still two-thirds of the orchard left...so, the most stubborn mare in PonyVille, gave in.

"Okay, Twah'light..."

"I am not taking "no" for an answer-what?" Twilight asked, thinking Applejack would still decline the offer; Spyro didn't blame her.

"Yes, Twah'light. Yes, *Please*." Applejack begged, even putting her hooves together in a begging plea. "I could *really* use your help."

Twilight gave a satisfied giggle, nodding in acceptance...and then sighing in relief. "Finally..." She muttered to herself. "Spyro, Savagera, could you two stay here and help Applejack? I'm going to get the others."

Spyro nodded. "Sure thing."

As Twilight ran back to PonyVille to get the others, Savagera and Spyro brought Applejack back to the farmhouse; the earth pony was resting of Savagera's back, being carried up to her room and placed in bed. Spyro even went as far as to pull up the sheets and tuck her into bed.

"Thank you mighty, Guys. You're very kind." Applejack told him in a tired tone. "I'm very glad to have you two as my friends." Applejack said with a weak smile.

Spyro smiled. "It's no problem, AJ." He told her.

Savagera, however, seemed a little bit surprised. Forgiveness was one thing, but even after what he had done to her, she was willing and wanting to accept him as an ally...or as a 'friend', as the sentinent races put it?

It was...odd...but a nice kind of odd.

The rest of the day was spent with Twilight, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, Rainbow Dash, Spike, Spyro, and Savagera finishing up Applejack's job as the mare got her much-needed sleep. Fluttershy and Rainbow used their wings to fly up into the trees to rustle down the apples onto baskets and buckets that Pinkie and Rarity were using to collect with. Savagera pulled the cart, being the only one strong enough to do so by himself, while Twilight and Spyro used their magic to lift entire tree's worth of apples out of the orchard and into large buckets waiting for them.

"Dear Princess Celestia,

My friend Applejack is the best friend a pony could ever have, and she's always there to help any pony. The only trouble is, when she needs help, she finds it hard to accept it, so while friendship is about giving of ourselves to friends, it's also about accepting what our friends have to offer.

Your faithful student, Twilight Sparkle."

"How about y'all take a little break? I got some fine apple juice waitin' for ya!" Spyro and the others heard Applejack, now fully rested and healthy again, from over at the barn. She had a table with several drinks of apple juice, which everyone headed over too with eager mouths.

"Girls..." She began, but caught herself. "...and Guys...I can't thank you enough for this help. I was actin' a bit stubborn."

"A *bit*?" Twilight asked with a laugh.

"Okay. A might' stubborn." Applejack said with a grin...that turned into an apologetic smile. "...and I'm awful sorry. Now, I know the town gave me the Prized Pony Award...but the *real* award is having you eight as my friends." Everyone smiled at her before taking their drinks, the juice just what was needed for their dry mouths.

"Phew! That applebucking sure made me hungry!" Rainbow Dash exclaimed.

Spike had walked over here and offered them a 'snack'. "And I've got the perfect treat!" He said, lifting up a plate full of the bad muffins that made every pony sick.

"Eeew, Spike! I threw those all away!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed as she flinched away from Spike. "Where'd you get them?"

"From the trash!" Spike replied cheerfully.

Spyro and Savagera didn't seem to care or want any, but the girls all made disgusted faces and shouted "EWWWWWW!" in response.

"Just a *little* nibble? Come *on*..." Spike encouraged. However, every pony declined his offer with disgust, all heading back to town to return to their beds as the sun began setting. Applejack returned to her farm house, probably to check up on Big Macintosh, while Savagera had just disappeared again, having returned to the EverFree Forest.

Spyro merely chuckled to himself as he walked alongside Twilight; he could tell that the times were just going to get a lot more fun here.

PonyVille, Midnight:

Time Turner whistled to himself as he trotted down the cobble-stoned street, PonyVille's street lamps lighting the way to his house. He had just returned by train from an important seminar of the relative theories of time-matter relation that he earned his Dr.'s Degree for in Canterlot, being an important scientist there, and was heading home to get some well deserved sleep and get back to his workshop in the morning. In PonyVille he ran a shop usually dealing with clocks, hourglasses, and other time-telling devices, but that was all just a part of his studies on Time itself.

He enjoyed his status as a famous professor...but if he had to hear another crack about a nameless time-traveling doctor ever again...

Lost in his thoughts, she didn't notice one of the lamps was giving off significantly less light than the others until the large serpent suddenly lashed down from above and struck the doctor full force with powerful jaws that were bigger then the pony himself. Time Turner didn't even have time to scream before the creature yanked him off the ground and slammed him full force into the side of the nearby hut headfirst.

With a sickening crack of bone and flesh, the stallion went limp for good.

Hissing in satisfaction, the enormous Titanoboa uncoiled its upper body from the weakening street lamp, the rest of its body trailing off toward the EverFree Forest, before swallowing down its victim's body and slithering back into the forest from which it emerged...though it paused and stayed hidden as a familiar roar filled the night. It looked up to see a large, red dragon-like wyvern flying overheard against the full moon, it's spiked tail, barbed wings, long hind legs, and dragon-like head clearly identifying it as the Lord of the Skies.

Staying still until the Rathalos passed overhead, the Titanoboa slithered back into the forest of this new world it called home, the roars and calls of other creatures that had arrived already filling the night.

The Prehistorian Invasion was getting into full swing.

7. Planet of the FrogApes

CHAPTER VI: PLANET OF THE FROGAPES

Edge of the EverFree Forest, Near Canterlot Mountain:

When Neublar woke up, there was nothing but darkness. He wasn't worried though; he was simply face-down in his pillow, caught in that blissful state between sleep and wakefulness.

In other words, the Amphibiod had absolutely no intention of getting up.

It was only when a soft wind blew over his fur did he realized something wasn't right. At first he assumed he had left the window open, or Carlotta was opening it up in order to get him and the others to wake up, but it felt too wide and spread out to be blowing in through a window. It was if he was outside...

He lifted his head and opened his eyes. The sudden light caused a stab of pain in his head, however, and he immediately snapped his eyes closed again, wincing and rubbing them with his wrist before trying again to open his eyes much more slowly than before. The sight before him made him get up rather quickly, jumping to his feet in alarm as he looked about himself,

forgetting all about his aches and soreness. He was no longer in Eric's Palace...in fact, he was pretty sure he wasn't in Starina anymore!

He wasn't in bed; he had been lying in a comfy pile of moss, the entire palace...and the entire village, for that matter, completely gone. Instead, he was now standing smack in the middle of what looked like a large, almost jungle-like forest, with large trees and all shorts of plant life. In front of him was the very edge of the forest, opening up to wide, open pastures and rolling hills of green, and behind him the forest went in deeper, growing darker as it went; he was currently standing at the edge of a large river that flowed lazily onto the jungle...from a great waterfall falling from the mountain to his right, the frogape now standing at the very base of it. Looking up, he could a enormous, grand castle/city built on the side, overhanging the forest; it seemed to be defying gravity itself.

But the most obvious sign that he wasn't in Starina anymore was that the Atlantic Ocean that the village and palace was built right next to was nowhere in sight.

As Neublar tried to grasp where he was and how he got here, he noticed something else: It was warm, the land was green, and the sun was out. That shouldn't be happening. It was the middle of October and freezing cold outside! Plus, there wasn't any forest within 10 miles of the village, other than the small woods surrounding the lagoon where Ariel and Eric *almost* had their first kiss.

And yet here he was.

'Maybe the Tech Elemental Skylanders were testing another teleportation machine on me and blasted me off to who knows where...again.' He concluded, looking about at the view before him. *'Well, if they did, then I am, for once, happy with where they sent me.'*

Despite the fact he was completely lost and nowhere near home, Neublar felt very peaceful and in awe with the landscape. The amount of color there was to this land was breathtaking: the subtle movements among the leaves of trees as creatures traversed them, the sounds of said animals and other critters as they interacted in their environments, and just the color itself of this whole land practically oozed with a heavenly vibe that seemed to instill actual happiness. It was like he was in a magic painting or something.

But apparently he wasn't alone.

A mighty roar that nearly made him jump out of his skin drew his attention skywards, spotting the Rathalos fly overhead; the Flying Wyvern seemed to stay within the borders of the forest, but all the same announced to the Amphibiod that he wasn't the only creature to arrive here.

'Okay, so it isn't just me...' He thought to himself, hiding underneath the low-lying plants; his dark blue fur was natural for blending into the dark shadows of the jungle. He then just laid there and thought of his options *'...Let's see, I'm in a new place that could or could not be Prehistoria; looks friendly, but also has scary monsters, and I don't mean me.'* He thought to himself. *'So I can either Plan A: Stay here and wait for the Techs to teleport me back, if this is even their work*

at all, or Plan B: Climb up the mountain to that kingdom up there and find a civilized species of hopefully the friendly type.'

Another roar behind him answered his question; he whirled around to find himself staring down the throat of a surfacing Gobul, a large angler-fish monster who just loved frogs and frog-like animals...as appetisers.

"PLAN B IT IS!" He screamed as he bolted up the side of the mountain just milliseconds before the jaws clamped shut with a mighty slam. Seeing its prey escaped and now too far away for any chance of successful pursuit, the large fish-like monster submerging back into the deep.

PonyVille Library:

Twilight Sparkle never assumed this day would actually come...Most ponies who would hear of this would laugh and say it was impossible...but it had just happened, and Twilight was stunned beyond belief of the mere concept of this actually being true: Never, truly *NEVER* would she expect herself to feel the way she did now.

How could she, the pony hungriest for knowledge in the school for gifted unicorns, possibly think that she just received *TOO MUCH INFORMATION*?!

Shocking to say the least.

But not entirely unbelievable considering with what she was reading: Spyro's book of Prehistorian Monsters. She was currently sitting at her desk in her personal quarters, and had actually skipped ahead to the Sentinent Races class to look up more data of the dragons of Prehistoria that Spyro hadn't shared with her yet. What he had written down in the book was telling about dragons from a dragonologist's perspective, as if one was studying animals...which included a few topics that Spyro apparently had the decency not to mention to the opposite sex.

One positive thing she find out was that Spike would grow his wings in about five years, something all baby Equestrian Dragons did when they turned thirteen. Apparently, it was a painful process and comparable to finding your cutie mark. (The fact that nothing could make a dragon's wings appear before their time, not the painful part...at least for most ponies.) It marked the end of their Baby or 'Hatchling' time and began their puberty.

She also found out that Spyro was currently 257 years old, which would be mid-teens by dragon standards (same age status as her 15 years of age), and Ignitus was 1,675 years old. It was possible...*just* possible...that Ignitus could be older than Princess Celestia herself!

She had just read the article of dragon races. There were different sub-species of Prehistorian Dragons: the Beast Makers, the Artisans, The Falx Cauda, Magic Crafters, Dream Weavers, and Peace Keepers. These six different dragons each had different cultures and living styles thanks to their bodily builds and physical capabilities, most of them living in the large section of

the planet called Alavar. Spyro was very descriptive and detailed in the descriptions of each race. This is what Twilight read:

~~~Beast Makers~~~

Beast Makers are a hulking race of tremendously powerful swamp-dwelling dragons, and without doubt one of the most archaic races of dragons ever to swim the green and murky waters of Avalar. Despite their gruesome appearance, these dragons are usually a calm, laid back and hospitable bunch (they can, however, become quite aggressive when hungry or threatened, and they possess a particularly strong hatred for gnorcs) and even though they might seem gruff or tactless from the perspective of an outsider, in truth this is not intentional rudeness on their part. You see, Beast Makers are awfully fond of frankness and even blunt honesty at times. They make no elaborately constructed illusions to hide their true thoughts and opinions as other races do and have consequently gained a reputation for truthfulness. Beast Makers enjoy roughhousing, although they tend to forget their abundant strength whilst doing so with foreigners and can sometimes sprain or badly bruise them by accident.

As I mentioned before (several times now, I would assume), Beast Makers possess incredible physical strength, as is no doubt already visible to the observer. Their fearsome jaws (which have such great, heavy muscles that they cannot hold their heads aloft, leastways not for very long periods, without growing tired from the weight) can crush bone and horn and thick turtle shells. The stomachs of these dragons are so tough that they can process just about anything they gobble up and never have worry themselves with the possibility feeling queasy later on in the evening. One well-aimed cuff from their massive forepaws would be enough even to send the mighty earth guardian Terrador reeling. Their thick, powerful tails allow them to glide through even the very thickest and most stagnant swamps - and it is noteworthy that some of the swamps located in the realm of Avalar are so dense and murky that they might as well consist entirely of chunky peanut butter! - as though they were eels of the sea gracefully slipping through the water. The scaly hides of these dragons, which are rough and bumpy much like the skin of a crocodile, is quite sturdy and incredibly difficult to penetrate unless you happen to be some great swamp serpent, giant avalarian spiny snapping turtle, or perhaps another Beast Maker. Provided one does actually manage to seriously wound one of them by taking off an arm, a leg, or even an entire tail, they have been known not only to survive the battle but also continue on with their lives just as easily as though no such amputation had ever occurred. They can also survive up to a full year without even so much as the tiniest morsel of food. Although terribly heavy, Beast Makers are not the slow lumbering creatures that some people seem to believe they are, nor do they have bad eyesight or slow wits. Quite on the contrary, they can keep pace with any Artisan on foot, possess keen vision (although it isn't of much use to them under the murky waters of the swamp) an impeccable sense of smell, and they learn just as quickly and easily as most.

Of course, as with any species, the Beast Makers too have their shortcomings. One Achilles heel is their dependency upon water. Despite being capable of surviving for several months

without it, a watery environment is absolutely essential for the long life, health, and contentment of these dragons. Another weakness are their wings which are proportionately insignificant and, although they can still be used for swimming, fluttering, and gliding, are almost completely and utterly useless for the purpose of flight. So heavy are their bodies that, despite their powerful wing muscles, staying airborne for a Beast Maker is like a whelp attempting to fly whilst carrying in his jaws an adamantine orb: not impossible, but really, truly, honestly difficult and one cannot be expected to rise more than a few short feet from the earth. Although typically the gentle giants of the dragon realm towards friends and allies, Beast Makers make vicious enemies and positively despise gnorcs for it is they who invade the peace and quiet of their homelands with deafening machinery and threaten them with the one weakness which even their tough hides cannot shield them from: electricity. It is for this reason that they take vicious delight in disposing of the gnorcs so violently and will often hunt them down for sport.

~~~Artisans~~~

The Artisans are a diverse and versatile race of dragons who enjoy building great towers and colossal castles and cities of stone for themselves to live in. Although able to adapt to a wide range of different climates, they feel most at home in lands which can provide them with lush verdant valleys, tall forests, roomy caves and high grassy hills overlooking a vast lake or ocean. With that being said, the Artisans would've felt quite comfortable in places such as ancient Scotland or England, and perhaps even payed these places a visit now and again in days long past when the veil between Earth and Avalar was thinner than it is today. Out of all the dragon races of Avalar it is my belief that the Artisans, should a human being somehow manage to find him or herself mystically transported into the magnificent realm of dragons, would prove to be the most familiar to them and thus the most welcoming. Not only are they the mirror image of the traditional western-style dragons that we are accustomed seeing in our fairy tales, but their culture also mirrors ours in many respects. For one thing the Artisans view romance and nobility under a very similar light and only take one mate (although it is most important to remember that, as with any society populated by multiple species of sentient free-thinking creatures, there are no shortage of exceptions!). Another similarity is their social structure which possesses a hierarchical government complete with judges, councils, guards, aristocrats and elected officials which is, for the most part, orderly and benevolent provided it is closely monitored for signs of unwanted corruption.

Unlike other dragon races, the physical body of the average run-of-the-mill Artisan is not necessarily born with any naturally extreme advantages or disadvantages: although they wield a fair amount of mana and are naturally quite intelligent, creative, and able in the ways of magic they still do not even begin to come close to some of the more advanced races such as the Magic Crafters, although they possess ample stamina and strength their bodies are nowhere near as fortified as the Beast Makers, although they are fairly swift of foot and wing they still cannot compare to the nimble she-dragons of the Falx Cauda, and though they make fair swimmers they are certainly not oceanic dragons. The Artisan race as a whole does not truly excel at any of these things like some of their allies, but although some might choose to view this as a flaw in truth it is this even balance of different attributes which has made them one of the most numerous, versatile, adaptive and thereby successful dragon races in the realm. You

see, unlike other species who might be faultlessly intelligent but at the same time exceedingly weak of body, or frighteningly powerful but flimsy of mind or wing, Artisans are neither black nor white but instead they exist in a bit of a grey area and can do a little bit of everything.

~~~Falx Cauda (a.k.a. Scythe Tails, Sickle Tails, Hook Tails, etc.)~~~

The Falx Cauda are a somewhat anti-social and unwelcoming race of dragons who generally prefer the solitary deep caves and dark forests of Avalar as opposed to dwelling out under the wide open skies as other races do; they are also the largest and strongest of the dragon breeds, which make them all the more dangerous. Personality wise the members of this race are generally more or less of a neutral evil character. Most of them wouldn't even flinch if they were forced to harm or even kill another to get what they wanted, but neither would they go out of their way to bring carnage and destruction to innocent bystanders when they see no direct benefit to it. Nevertheless, these dragons have a sullied reputation (and very rightly so!) among the other races for going behind their backs and changing sides when it is convenient for them or when it suits their goals. The Falx Cauda are very much a male-dominated species whose society is run similarly to the African lion prides of Earth in the sense that it is the females who hunt and rear young, while the males take center stage and do all of the fighting, leading, defending, and decision making. Male Falx Cauda, unless they are childless and mateless rogues which can also be found in lion society, typically have anything from four to twenty different mates and often just as many children. One of the reasons for this might possibly be because the darkened lands in which these dragons prefer to make their abodes are typically quite treacherous and filled to the rafters with the unsavory beasts of Prehistoria, many of them powerful and/or poisonous, and thus the hatchling mortality rate can be fairly high.

The females of this race are particularly adept at utilizing their bodies as a bargaining chip, a tactic they've been known to use on anyone from their spouses to dragon kings and lords (often at the instruction of their mates who enjoy using the threat of a leaked scandal as blackmail against their enemies in the territorial arena!). Male and female Falx Cauda are very different from one another, both in appearance and character, and so many a foreigner have often mistaken them for two completely separate species. The females, being smaller and weaker than the opposite sex, tend to be seductive and manipulative while the males typically embody the powerful, dominating alpha-dog stereotype. Together they from a kind of Yin versus Yang balancing act.

~~~Magic Crafters~~~

The Magic Crafters are an enlightened race of incredibly adept magic users who make their homes in the high enchanted snow-capped hills of Avalar alongside the friendly fair folk of the summits. As you may well have noticed, these dragons have very few bodily defenses: only four horns, a beak, delicate scales and some short, flimsy claws. This is because their true strengths lie in the realms of knowledge and magic, two subjects in which they are terribly well-versed to say the least. The Magic Crafters have in their hearts a deep and insatiable thirst for majesty, splendor, refinement and wisdom. I suppose one might call them the Renaissance men/women of the dragon realm, and not only other dragons but many of the infinitely diverse races of

Avalar strive to imitate their architecture, poetry, mathematics, and music. As I mentioned previously, the Magic Crafters have always had close ties to the faeries of the great mountains in which they live. These tiny beings have even been known to look after their whelps to ensure they don't do something foolish like run straight off the edge of a cliff whilst playing their innocent little games and not paying attention to where they are going. Like most races the Magic Crafters also celebrate a number of holidays and love a good festival. Unlike other races, however, special events in their culture very rarely have anything at all to do with brawn as they most favor the pursuits of the mind. Magical duels, storytelling, riddles, chess, and aerial acrobatics is all the excitement you're liable to find in their hills, not gory battle scars!

~~~Dream Weavers~~~

The Dream Weavers are a enigmatic race of dragons who live on a large floating land mass which, imbued with some sort of archaic enchantment no doubt, hovers suspended in the air high above the land of Avalar unanchored by gravity, physics, time, or any other sort of logic in general. This race has been in existence going back as far back any elder can remember, but even still only very little is known about them as they all tend to speak in riddles and even the transcendental land which they inhabit behaves as though it were merely a dream. One archaic legend suggests that the Dream Weavers are, as their name would suggest, the manufacturers and distributors of all the dreams of every living creature in Avalar and that they roam the non-physical dream realm in spirit, devouring nightmares whenever they chance upon them. although this theory seems unlikely, it is a known fact that they are highly psychic and possess a great talent for the creation and manipulation of thoughts and dreams.

~~~Peace Keeper~~~

The ironically named Peace Keepers are a hostile race of warrior dragons who reside in the great scorching deserts of Avalar where the days are as hot as a white blaze and the nights are cold and cruel. A great deal of confusion has come about as a direct result of the Peace Keepers' name and why such a warlike race would ever choose to refer to themselves by such a seemingly benevolent title, but the answer is really quite simple for one well versed in their ways: you see, this race has a rather grim sense of humor (hardly surprising given their surroundings) as well as a deep distrust and dislike of outsiders. It's normal for them to refer to a vicious attack as a 'greeting', or attempted murder as a 'fond farewell', and under no circumstances should the phrase 'you are welcome to take your pick of any of my most lavishly decorated chambers to rest in tonight' be mistaken for kind words of hospitality when uttered by Peace Keeper tongues! However, should a Peace Keeper ever refer to you as a villain and order you to be hauled out into the desert and punctured with the poisonous fangs off slain sand snakes until you are drained of blood and are left to have your wretched bones bleached by the sun for all eternity, you must be sure and take this as their highest compliment and be on your best manners. This purposely backwards language is their means of perplexing outsiders and discouraging foreigners from integrating with them, as well as being one of their favorite forms of amusement.

To help cope with the dry climate in which they live, the Peace Keepers' scales provide a unique solution: they are actually capable of absorbing moisture and transferring it to the rest of the body. This makes it possible for them to sustain themselves on moisture hanging in the early morning air. They can even submerge a part of their (body such as an arm or a foot) into a thick puddle of mud and absorb all of it's water, leaving only dry sand behind. For this reason it is possible for them to live their entire lives without ever having to actually take a single drink. Peace Keepers have a Spartan-esque mentality in the sense that they possess no tolerance for weaklings cluttering up the gene pool and thus abandon deformed or crippled hatchlings to the sand worms and raise the healthier, luckier whelps to be cunning and merciless fighters. This race is nothing to sneeze at and, should you ever come across one of them, it is best to disregard it's age or appearance no matter how tattered and worn or tender and young in may seem to you. Even if it should happen to be missing all of it's teeth, you can bet your boots that the very fact that he or she is still breathing is proof enough of his or her strength, but as you can imagine these dragons have a very high infant mortality rate. Fortunately the ancestors, in their wisdom, have provided a solution to this problem as well, and expectant Peace Keeper mothers can typically count on laying eggs in the double digits to help sustain their numbers in spite of the challenges of the desert.

It told Twilight that Spyro was an Artisan Dragon, but with Falx Cauda in his ancestry; that would explain his more aggressive side, his acceptance into a group of only females, and his ability to become stronger overnight. All of the other teens dragons were Artisan as well, as were the Elemental Guardians; in fact, she and her friends had wondered into the Artisan section of the Dragon Mountain Range, all the dragons there being either Artisans or Artisan/other hybrid: Bash's father was a Beast Maker dragon, Camo was half plant thanks to his element, Sunburn's mother was a phoenix, and of course Whirlwind's mother was a unicorn pony...but Cynder, Twilight found to her discomfort, was the only full-bred Falx Cauda dragon of the group.

Whoever turned Cynder into a dragon did so with evil purposes.

Awkwardly for Twilight, she was currently reading the following part...which was about Dragon Mating. Apparently, dragons were sexually active long before their puberty began, which gave Spike's romantic quests a rather uncomfortable aftertaste. Puberty only marked the beginning of fertility. It did explain, though, the reasons for all the 'dragons carrying off fair virgin maidens' stories: all those cases involved male dragon teens or young adults, usually Artisan, going through their first breeding season. These reptilian cassynova wanna-bes would capture these beautiful girls, sometimes ones they had crushes on while hatchlings, in response to their activating hormones. That was the reason that Spike captured Rarity of all ponies back when he was maturing to adult stage by greed-induced magic.

And now she had reached a very long and very *detailed* description of...well, she was playing with the thought of asking Rarity to move somewhere *cooler*...maybe that one comet she had seen during the shower. The one that wouldn't pass Equestria for the next 4 billion years...

VOOM!

"EEP!" She squealed in fright as a familiar eruption of orange fire blazed by the window in front of her, causing her to jump backwards into a stack of books, creating a big explosion of paper and binding. She then poked her head out of the mess, a book impaled on her horn, to look out the window. Spyro and Spike were outside; Spike was standing in the street blowing streams of green flame, trying to make them big, while Spyro was sitting on the sidelines near the library, watching his fellow dragon practice, his own mouth still generating small wisps of smoke. A few passing-by ponies occasionally stopped and watched the two dragons in their humble villages.

Spyro was begun teaching Spike how to be a true dragon. Right now he was teaching Spike how to breathe *real* fire, and after the first hour he was beginning to show progress: his green flames had taken on a yellowish tint, and had lost most of their sparkly magic aura. Spike was, at first, discouraged by the very slow progress, but Spyro encouraged him on, telling him that the only things worth while are those that require lots of work to achieve.

"Very good." Spyro complimented him once the baby dragon got his flames to a gold/green color. "You're coming along great!"

"Thanks, Spyro!" Spike said eagerly; nothing like a compliment from your idol to boost self-esteem. "So, what next?"

"How about you two taking your little 'lessons' somewhere away from beneath my balcony?!" An angry Twilight growled as she exited the library, her book still impaled on her horn. She noticed it and pulled it off, examining the title with shock. "Wha-?! Oh, not 'The Art of the To-Do List'!" She whined before glaring at the two dragon now standing in attention, who were both looking amused and terrified at the moment. "That's it! You two! Go blow fire somewhere else!"

"We're done blowing fire." Spyro told her calmly.

"What?! Aw, come on! I was just getting into it!" Spike objected.

But Spyro shook his head. "Sorry, Spike, but you're still a baby dragon, and your fire glands can't take too much at this age." He told him. "I don't want to wind up getting you hurt." He then grinned. "Twilight would kill me."

"I'm already fixing to skin both your tails into a pair of dragon-skin belts!" The purple unicorn snarled threateningly. "They'll go nicely with the dresses I make out of the rest of you two!"

"Sheesh! Calm down!" Spyro told her, he and Spike backing a few steps away from her. "What's so special about that certain book, anyway?" He then asked, using his own magic to grab the book and bring it up to read the title. "'*The Art of the To-Do List*', written by Twi-" His eyes widened in surprise. "*You* wrote this book?"

Twilight's anger seem to fade. "Indeed I have, my good dragon." She said, suddenly in the tone of a professional professor explaining her own book. "It was the best selling idea in the history of

to-do books! A book dedicated to teaching foals and ponies alike the magic and organization of check lists of their daily tasks! That, my dear, is my gift to the public of Equestria."

"Sounds...*interesting*?" Spyro asked awkwardly, glancing to Spike for an explanation, but the baby dragon was just as confused as he was.

"It was more than just interesting! It had the makings of a best seller!" Twilight told him. "I have no idea how the bookstore selling went bankrupt only after two hours; I read mine all the time." She then groaned, once again becoming cross. "This was the only copy left; the only one that hadn't been burned by a crazy, Discord worshiping cult. Now what am I going to do when I need to make another kind of checklist?!"

"What, you haven't used every kind of checklist imaginable yet?" Spike asked sarcastically.

Spyro merely chuckled at Twilight's stern face. "Come on, Spike. We've got more dragon training to do." He told the baby dragon as the two began to walk off. "I think you're ready for your first Canterlot gem raid."

"You boys do that." Twilight grumbled, taking her damaged book back to the library. "I'll-" She stopped abruptly when Spyro's words finally clicked in her mind. "GET BACK HERE RIGHT NOW!" She screamed after them, but they had already began running. Twilight growled something under her breath before she took off after them...not noticing three fillies pop out of the bushes nearby.

"CUTIE MARK CRUSADER DRAGON CAPTURERS! YAY!"

Canterlot, WonderBolts Derby, three hours later:

The only thing out of the ordinary at the Derby was a large blue/green primate struggling to pull himself up the steep side of the mountain; Neublar had been pulling himself up the side of the mountain for three straight hours, and it was taking its toll of even him. A hungry Gobul waiting at the bottom was a powerful motivator.

"Apple Sauce...Kniting Utensils...Rocket Fuel..." Neublar groaned as he pulled himself up, grabbing onto the ledge with one hand. He then strained to pull his bloated body over the ledge of the railing "...*Albert Horsestien's Molten Steel Fig Cookies*!" He squealed before flopping over onto the balcony with a loud crash; he then simply laid on his back, limbs sprawled out and belly in the air, panting with exhaustion. "Ahhhhh...ugggggh..." He gasped between breaths. "Once I...get back...I'm signing...up for...Cali's Heroic Challenges!" He then looked confused. "Wait...why'd I say *'Horse'*stien?"

He looked up from where he lay to be greeted with a sight that made his eyes widen in awe. Only now that he had gotten out from underneath it could he see just how beautiful and majestic it was, perfectly matching the rest of this world. Grand white and purple towers with golden roofs

stretched as high as the mountain itself, streets, stairs, and bridges paved of polished marble, and buildings decorated with a royal look fit for kings. The entire city looked like it was one giant castle, great banners and flags of two winged unicorns forming the Yin-Yang symbol hanging and flying from every pole and doorway visible.

But was even more interesting was the resident race.

Neublar looked about in surprise at all the...equines...going about their normal lives in this city; he, at first, thought they were horses, but they were too small and 'cartoony' for that. Also, he saw that almost all of them each had a singular horn on his/her forehead.

'So, I'm in a land of magical, talking unicorns?' He asked himself, simply sitting where he was. *'Huh...who'd guessed a world like this existed? Well, I've seen dragons, fairies and mermaids, so why not unicorns?'* Then, with a little effort, he managed to stand himself back up. *'Well, unicorns are horse-like at least, and horses are herbivores, and therefore unicorns must be at least non-predatory. I better make a first good impression.'*

So, he walked up to the nearest group of ponies, and introduced himself.

"Hi, there; my name is Neublar Z. Frogface. Could you unicorns, by chance, tell me where I am?" He said in the friendliest, most polite manner he could muster.

But the reaction to his presence should've been expected.

"*MONSTER*!" They all shrieked before bolting, screaming all the way.

"*WHERE*?!" Neublar cried, looking about for said monster before bounding away himself, screaming as well. The sight of a screaming frogape barreling down the street certainly sent many ponies fleeing for their lives, though at the moment Neublar was exactly in the same mental state as they were...until he braked to a stop, realization hitting him like a hammer. "Wait...you don't mean *me*, do you?!" He asked a nearby unicorn mare.

She screamed at the sight of him before firing away as if shot out of a gun, even making the same sound.

Neublar sighed. "I thought so." He muttered disheartedly, sitting down with a thump.

"WOAH! What is *that* thing?" A much younger voice, like that of a tomboyish girl, asked. Neublar looked downwards to his left to see three fillies standing about two feet away from him.

"It kinda looks like a big monkey-frog thing." Applebloom said in response to Scootaloo's question.

"Maybe it one of those monsters from Spyro's world." Sweetie Belle stated thoughtfully.

Neublar perked up at the mention of a certain purple dragon. "Wait a minute. Did you say Spyro?" He asked; the girls seemed slightly surprised to hear him talk, but didn't say anything

about him. "As in a purple dragon with yellow horns, red wings, and about this tall?" He lifted his hand up to what was Spyro's height, which was almost the same as his own; just a little shorter than him.

"Yeah, you know him?" Sweetie Belle asked in surprise.

"Uh huh." Neublar stated." He's a friend of mine from Prehistoria. I'm Neublar Z. Frogface, and who are you three?"

"Neublar Z. 'Frogface'? That's funny!" Scootaloo snickered, trying hard to hold in her laugh. Neublar promptly pouted in a comical way, whining slightly, his eyes growing big and watery.

"Scootaloo! Don't be mean!" Applebloom scolded the orange pegasus filly. "He's Spyro's friend! It's not nice ta make fun of somepony's name!"

"Besides, I don't think Spyro would be very happy if we hurt his friend's feelings." Sweetie Belle murmured, unnerved at the thought of an angry dragon coming after them. "Sorry about that, Mr. Neublar. I'm Sweetie Belle, by the way."

Despite the big, watery eyes, Neublar managed a small, slightly silly-looking smile...

Canterlot Royal Gardens:

"Wow! That was the most fun I've had in weeks!" Spike said with his mouth full of gems as he rode on Twilight's back, with Spyro walking alongside them; the two dragons and a very pissed-off-looking unicorn were walking through Canterlot's Royal Gardens. Spike was carrying had his arms full of gems, him munching on a few as they walked along. "And it was delicious! We gotta do that again sometime!"

Twilight, however, wouldn't hear it, her voice bordering a demonic growl. "If you two *ever* break into Canterlot's Royal Treasury like that again, I *swear* I'll-!"

"Calm down, Twilight." Spyro told her softly. "It wasn't that big a deal."

"HOW WAS THAT NOT A 'BIG DEAL'?!" She screamed at him, her enraged face coming close to 'The Stare' in sheer intensity; not quite there, but as close as anypony who wasn't Fluttershy could get. "YOU TWO GOT US ARRESTED BY THE ROYAL GUARDS FOR CELESTIA'S SAKE!"

"No one was hurt during our raid, or when I smashed through the roof of the Royal Vault." Spyro calmly yet nervously explained, sweat beginning to run down his forehead. "We didn't eat that many gems anyway."

Spike gave a laugh. "Besides, at least Princess Celestia got a good laugh we she came to bail us out." He told her before stuffing another large ruby into his mouth.

Twilight nodded sheepishly, developing an embarrassed blush. "Yeah...I guess she did..." she admitted quietly, remembering how needlessly worked up she'd gotten waiting for Celestia to get there. She wasn't sure why, considering she should've known Celestia wouldn't imprison her, banish her, or imprison her in the place she banished her to. She just wished she'd realized that before she made a fool out of herself begging Celestia not to when she showed up to pardon them. Spyro could've smashed his way out of there, but had decided to sit back and watch the show; he certainly wasn't disappointed.

"Well, we're in Canterlot; why don't we hang out for a while, maybe do a few things while we're here?" Spike suggested.

Twilight looked thoughtful. "Well, it's still an hour till we've got to head back to PonyVille...so, okay! What should we do in the meantime?" Twilight asked, passing by the stone-carved statue of a pony holding a flag.

"Well... could I throw a stink bomb into Prince Blueblood's room to pay him back for how he treated Rarity at the Gala?" Spike asked hopefully, producing one out of nowhere. "Rainbow Dash gave it to me."

"No, Spike! We'd get arrested...Again!" Twilight snapped, imagining Celestia's face if that happened. Even if she did laugh it off again, Twilight didn't particularly want to have her mentor bail her out *twice* in one day. But when did he get it? He didn't have it when they left PonyVille, and that was the last time she'd seen Rainbow Dash since then. She got the feeling maybe one of her friends were around, particularly a certain rainbow-haired pegasus with a love for pranks.

Spike grumbled. "Oh, come on! You have to admit, he deserves it..."

As the two argued about the topic, they and Spyro didn't notice they were taking different paths; The larger purple dragon was heading down one path, looking about at all the statues, and not paying attention to the fact he was wandering away from the bickering duo, who were also oblivious to the dragon's disappearance.

Spyro was confused by the garden multiple statues, and not in a simple way; while most merely resembled statues, some of them seemed out of place, such as the one of a monstrous dragon, a giant scorpion, and other monsters and even a few of ponies, looking as if they were caught by surprise or embracing their doom. Why were they carved like that?

...were they even *carved* at all?

His thoughts were cut off when he bumped into the pedestal of another statue, standing in the middle of the large clearing. He backed up and looked up at what was possibly the weirdest statue in the entire collect. It was of a serpentine creature that was twice as tall and long as he was, standing on two legs. It resembled a Chinese Lung Dragon, but it was not a dragon that even he had ever seen; it had a head of a very ugly pony, with mismatched-eyes, hairy eyebrows, a shaggy goatee, and a sharp fang jutting from the front of his mouth, but the rest of it was completely out of place: a lion's paw for a right arm, an eagle's claw for the left, a bat's

right wing and a bird's left wing growing from its shoulders, a stag's antler and an antelope's horn growing from the head, a dinosaur's right hind leg, a deer's left hind leg, and a long serpentine dragon's tail with a tuff of fur at the end. The statue was frozen in a position of fear, the face contorted with it, posed as if trying to use his hands to block an on-coming attack...just before being reduced to this state.

As he stared at the statue, he felt something radiating from the statue: Power. *Lot's* of it...*evil* power, along with a living aura; It felt...*alive*.

Blinking in surprise, he slowly approached the statue, sniffing it carefully; the statue remained in that same frozen position as Spyro stood up on his hind legs, reaching up to thirteen feet in height as he did so, his head just reaching the chest of the statue. Then, carefully, as if the statue would spring to life any moment...he put his ear against the chest of the creature.

Ba-dump...

Ba-dump...

Ba-dump...

Spyro jumped back in shock, landing back on all four feet as he stared at the statue in disbelief. It...it *was* alive!

But how?

"*That's* Discord." A quiet, almost heartbroken voice spoke up behind him; he looked back to see Twilight approaching him, Spike now missing. The unicorn's anger was gone, and a sad look of painful memories adorned her face. "The Spirit of Chaos and Disharmony. He's the one I mentioned back when PonyVille was panicking."

"How..." Spyro stammered, sitting down, his own heart hammering in his chest. "Who...what is all this?" He finally asked.

Twilight sighed, the memories of that horrible experience still haunting her. "He wasn't always a statue." She explained, still keeping that sad tone. "You see, Discord ruled Equestria before Celestia and Luna did, but he ruled it in a eternal state of chaos, cruelty, and unhappiness, tormenting and corrupting ponies for his own personal amusement. His reign ended when Celestia and Luna united and used the Elements of Harmony to defeat him, turning him to stone...but about six months ago, he escaped from his prison; the spell that Celestia and Luna put over him broke when Luna turned against her sister as Nightmare Moon, shattering their harmony and therefore their connection to the Elements. My friends and I, being the new bearers of the Elements, were the ones who had to defeat him this time around...but..."

She trailed off, tears forming as those horrible times passed through her mind: lying Applejack, angry Pinkie Pie, greedy Rarity, cruel Fluttershy, disloyal Rainbow Dash, a world of *pure chaos*...

Spyro waited for her to get over the memories, knowing what she must be going through; he knew the stories of the Elements of Harmony, that Twilight and her friends were the bearers of them and how they defeated a corrupted Luna. They must've defeated Discord, but something happened along the way.

"...W-When he first tried to defeat him, he c-coruppted my friends with his influence: Applejack became a liar, Rarity became greedy, Pinkie Pie was angry at everything, Fluttershy was d-downright monstrous...and R-Rainbow Dash abandoned us...but the worst part was t-that he d-didn't do *anything* to me."

This would confused most people, but Spyro knew what was coming.

"H-He didn't have to do anything t-to me...w-what he d-did to everypony else was enough." Twilight explained, the first tears running down her face, ears lowered in sorrow. "H-He turned my best f-friends into *m-monsters* and drove all of E-Equestria insane...except m-me...and I-I-I had to w-watch what h-he did t-to everypony I c-care about, c-c-completely aware of w-w-what was happening...b-b-but unable to h-help them..." She whispered in frightened sorrow, tears now flowing down her cheeks. "I-I-I never f-f-felt so *a-a-alone*."

Spyro didn't say anything; instead, he reached out a claw and wrapped it around Twilight, scooping the unicorn mare up against his chest and wrapping his arms around her in a cradling hug. Twilight stiffened in surprise at the movement, but soon she couldn't hold it back any longer and began silently weeping against him, burying her face against his golden chest-scales as she sobbed quietly, tears running from her eyes and falling against his chest. Spyro merely held her as she continued to release the stress and horror of that crushing event, glaring up at Discord's statue.

Stone was what he deserved to be.

The two stayed like that for a long time, under the gaze of Celestia's sun and of the statues in the garden...but one question still remained in Spyro's mind:

Was Discord the *only* statue that had once been living?

"I guessed everything turned out okay in the end, right?" He asked softly, setting her back down with equal tenderness, but still keeping his large yet gentle claw around her body in comfort. He decided to save his own question for later.

Twilight sniffed, wiping the tears from her face before she hugged the claw holding her; her eyes held unshed tears, but her mouth was in a smile. "P-P-Princess Celestia sent me all the letters I had sent her about friendship when I began to fall for Discord's influence myself. It reminded me how *true* friendship is unbreakable, no matter what anyone, even Discord, could do. Friendship is Magic; it may be silly-sounding, corny, and even ridiculous, but it's true all the same. I learned that, and my friends knew that long before I did; they just needed to remember that. I went to each of them, using magic to help them remember who they really were, and then we defeated

Discord, putting him back into stone." Her smile then faded. "Even thought he's trapped, I still have nightmares from time to time about what he did to us...it was...just so *horrible*."

"You'd be inpony if you didn't." Spyro told her as he removed his hand from her arms. "Even the bravest and strongest of warriors carry the scars of battle, physical, mental, or emotional; even I have nightmares of my past traumas...you could probably guess what, though." He said the last part in a quiet, almost sad tone. "But you can count on those who love you to help you get through them; I learned that a long time ago...though I wished I'd learned it sooner."

Twilight managed a small giggle. "That actually would make a good letter to send to Princess Celestia." She told him. "Could you write that down for me when we get back home?"

Spyro chuckled at her statement.

The purple unicorn softly perked up. "Hey, there's a place I want to show you before we go." She told him. "Come on."

Spyro nodded before standing up and following her out of the gardens, leaving the petrified body of Discord standing alone amongst all the other stone statues...

...but when they left, the area on Discord's chest where Spyro had put his ear to began to glow purple...and form small cracks.

Twilight's Old Library:

"...and this was my own personal library before I moved to PonyVille." The unicorn said as they climbed up the stairs to the upper level of Twilight's quarters. It was a huge library, *much* bigger and fancier than the one in PonyVille. The polished floor was navyblue while the shelves stretch up to more than five times Spyro's height. A huge hourglass stood near the center of the room, over next to where Twilight's old desk was sitting. There was even another story up where more shelves full of books stood.

Spyro, despite being amazed by the size and posh of this place, found it...empty and lonely.

"You really were into your books back then, weren't you?" He asked her.

"She still is." Spike stated flatly. "And whenever we got an assignment from the princess here, it usually ended up with us moving into our favorite doughnut shop and living off of nothing but coffee and sugar for several days." He licked his lips while his eyes rolled up in memories "Good times..."

"How else was I suppose to stay awake for three nights straight to keep studying?" Twilight asked as if it was the most obvious thing in the world to do. "Come to think of it, I think there's still a few books I need to bring back to PonyVille. Let's see, there's..." She continued on as she

trotted up the stairs to the higher level of the library, using her magic to collect multiple books from the different shelves.

"And there she goes again..." Spike muttered. "...ever since I was old enough to start helping her work, I've gone through trials and pains that are probably going to ruin my credit as a dragon." He told Spyro.

"Yet you still put up with it?" Spyro asked, looking down briefly at his fellow dragon.

Spike nodded proudly. "It may be insulting for dragons, but this honor was given to me by Princess Celestia herself!" He said in a bold, heroic tone, no doubt dreaming up some sort of brave hero fantasy of himself. "And as Celestia as my guide, it is my duty to Equestria to keep the princess's prized student alive and safe."

Spyro was surprised. "It gets *that* bad?" He asked in surprise.

"There are days I swear I'm gonna come back home to find her cobweb-covered skeleton hunched over some book in the library." Spike stated flatly, arms folded against his chest. "But I'm proud of my work, and coming home to see her sleeping and dreaming about having tea and cookies with the princess makes it all worth it!"

"Having tea and cookies?"

"Once I heard her whisper 'whipped cream' and 'Celestia' in her sleep once." Spike whispered to him. "She was so cute doing it."

Spyro groaned in what sounded like pain, recalling her dream he has seen when he first arrived about a week's time ago. "I don't think it was *that* kind of whipped cream, Spike." The older dragon groaned, his face looking slightly queasy.

"What does that mean?"

"Nothing your age should be allowed to know."

Spike groaned. "Why does everypony keep telling me that?" He asked with dismay.

"Because if I tell you that kind of stuff, Twilight and the other five would see me skinned alive." Spyro stated flatly as he walked away, stopping in front of the window to look out it. From here he had a good look of the castle courtyard and the other parts of the castle nearby, including the vault where Twilight told him the Elements of Harmony were currently being held in; this part of the castle had huge stain-glass windows depicting great moments in Equestria's history: The Founding of Equestria, the Rise and Fall of Discord, The Defeat of Nightmare Moon by Twilight and her friends, and Discord's second defeat also by the present six element wielders. There were others, but Spyro didn't know what they were of.

One which he recognized showed the symbol depicting the Elements of Harmony themselves; it was a golden display of the sun, featuring six gems embedded in the great star. The one in the center, which was also the largest, was a deep purple in color, with five smaller gems surrounding it in the star-like points of the sun: red, yellow, green, cyan, and magenta, in that order clockwise.

"So those are the Elements of Harmony, huh?" Spyro asked aloud as he cocked his head in curiosity.

"Yep. Those are the very foundations of this world's existence." Twilight told him as she approached, standing next to him and looking out the window. "The first is the Element of Honesty. It is especially important among friends in order to build solid relationships based on trust. The second is the Element of Kindness. Kindness is important even to someone you perceive to be your enemy. Kindness can often bring even the most powerful adversary over to your side. The third is the Element of Laughter. Because laughter can defuse even the most tense situations. The fourth is the Element of Generosity. Give generously of what you have. After all, you never know when you will be the one in need of generosity. The fifth is the Element of Loyalty. Loyalty to your friends, to the Princesses, and to Equestria and its ideals and values. The sixth element is revealed when the other five are in balance; those five combined are what give...the spark for the sixth element, which is the Element of Magic."

Spyro however, didn't look moved or even convinced by her words, staring at the window with a poker face that would put the princesses to shame.

"You don't seem convinced." Twilight said softly.

"I'm not." Spyro stated flatly. "That may be the way it works *here*, but when I was still human, it would've been poke-fodder. The only one that would've made sense would've been laughter. The rest of them would be nonsense: humans walk all over honesty, take advantage of generosity and kindness, and they betray loyalty. And magic isn't even suppose to exist. With human beings, the only way to advance and succeed in life was to do it on your own, and by any means possible."

Twilight looked visibly disturbed. She knew humans were terrible, but to think that the Elements of Harmony didn't even exist in their world. "Was it really that horrible?" She asked.

"That and then some."

"But why? Why would humans live in such a terrible way of life?"

"Because human beings were selfish and self-righteous." The purple dragon stated. "Too much of their society was based on self-image; if the neighbors get a new car, you had to get a new car better than theirs. If one country gains more advanced weapons or more valuable resources, then you had to get some better than theirs...even if you have to kill off other countries to do so. It was a never ending cycle of trying to outdo everyone else. To rise to the top of a system that rewards greed, to be the best of the best." He then snorted in amusement.

"Zeus said he made Man to be his greatest creation by making them in his image, but in reality, they were his biggest mistake; it was being made in the image of a god that gave them the pathetic belief that they were gods...it was the same story for each of the worlds that Zeus and the other gods put them in: beliefs clashed, countries went to war, millions upon millions were slaughtered, and the neglected planet slowly died off in the process, humankind with it."

Twilight was visibly frightened by such news, her simple life of harmony very shaken by the thought of such horrors existing. "What..." She took a breath deep to calm herself. "What happened to them?" She then asked.

Spyro's calm face turned into a dark glare, his eyes burning with hate as he glared into the distance.

"*Tyrone* showed up."

Twilight looked confused. "Tyrone?"

"A legendary saurian beast of almost infinite power...and infinite rage; you probably know him as the Snakeasaurus. Even Celestia and Discord couldn't stand up to his ferocity alone, let alone his power. This monster is widely excepted as the most powerful being in the universe, one who feasted on the flesh of the gods and destroyed thousands of worlds in his rampage of hatred and anger. He was the one who destroyed the true Earth thousands of years ago..." He paused, keeping as calm as he could as horrible memories surfaced in his mind. "...and my world was next on his list."

Twilight stayed silent.

"From what the legends say, his anger was drawn from a thirst for vengeance; what he wanted revenge for, nobody remembers...but apparently his revenge involved mankind, for he had been destroying worlds where humans and anything human-like had been living. Soon he wiped out all worlds in the Reality Realm...except for mine, which was next and last in line; he was hesitant to attack, thanks to the world being guarded by an army of Legendary Pokemon, but he soon got over that fear and attacked...on the day I was deemed a monster by my own race."

Twilight gave a soft gasp. "You mean...on the day you became a dragon...you entire world was *destroyed*?" She asked, her last words no more than a whisper.

Spyro nodded, a sad look gleaming in his eyes. "Yes. That's the reason I was viewed as a monster by humankind; when I first became a dragon, I was first thought to be a new species of the 'Pokemon' that populated that world, especially since many of them resembled dragons. It was only when Tyrone arrive did they turn on me. You see, Poke-World, despite being a world in the Reality Realm, had portals that connected it to this Fantasy Realm, which probably explained the bizzareness of that world...and these portals where connected to Prehistoria, which Tyrone opened to unleash a rage-driven swarm of monsters upon the planet. He and his monster army destroyed everything in their path; entire continents were destroyed, billions of

innocent lives were wiped out in days. The legendary pokemon tried to stop Tyrone, but he defeated them all, even killing a few...everything I ever *knew* and *loved*...*gone*."

The dragon gave a deep sigh through his nostrils, twin streams of smoke blowing from them, before continuing. "Once the main wave swept the planet, leaving only those that were fortunate to avoid the main attack; one place was my home, though we had suffered badly like the rest of the world. It was then Team Rocket, a crime organization that had survived thanks to their hidden underground fortress, arrive and filled their heads with the idea that I, being one of the monsters, was the reason the other monsters were there to begin with; they were in fact trying to obtain me and use my power to dominate the now-weakened world. That's when mankind turned on me."

Twilight nodded softly, staring at the dragon with sympathetic eyes. "Do you know what happened to that world?"

Spyro shook his head, turning away from the window and heading toward the stairs. "What goes on in that world nowadays is no longer my concern." He stated with such uncaring bluntness that Twilight was taken aback. "If any of my old friends survived the first wave of attack and managed to find a way to live in what was left of it, then they would've died of age *long* ago. There's nothing left in it for me."

The purple unicorn frowned slightly at his remark; he didn't care about his old home anymore? He had a family and friends there, even if they were human; he just discarded it all in the past and threw away the memories of the good times?! Why?

What about the betrayal was *that* horrible to him?

"What about Tyrone?" Twilight then called after him; he stopped and looked back. "Is he still alive?"

Spyro shook his head, a relieved smile adorning his face. "Don't worry." He assured her. "He was slain a long time ago."

And then he left.

"What was *that* all about?" Spike asked as he hopped up onto Twilight's back.

"I'm not sure." Twilight admitted as they trotted out the door. "I guess he just-"

PPHHWWAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNTT!

"What was *that*?!" Twilight asked awkwardly. "It-*ACK*! And *what* is that *smell*?!" She cried, shoving her hooves against her nostrils.

It was, by far, the worst stink she had ever smelled, even worse than the stench of the Hydra's breath during her adventure in Froggy Bottom Bog and even that of the skunks she got sprayed

by during Winter Wrap Up; it smelled like a skunk's odor mixed with swamp sludge/vapor, rotten eggs, dead fish, old sneakers, and burnt hooves. She could barely breathe thanks to it.

Even Spyro gagged at the smell, but after a few seconds he seemed to grow use to it, groaning in annoyance. "I'd know that smell anywhere." He muttered, rubbing the bridge of his snout with his fingers in annoyance. "So, Neublar's arrived as well." He stated, looking up. Twilight cracked her squeezed-shut eyes open to see the smell was coming from a large cloud of greenish-pink gas spreading throughout the city, its center point being the main square.

"Who?" Spike asked.

But he got no answer as Spyro spread his wings and took off into the sky, flying faster than anyone could move on land. Twilight and Spike gave each other looks of confusion before running after the purple dragon.

Main Square:

"EWWWWW!" The Cutie Mark Crusaders all squealed in unison, covering their noses with their hooves as she, Apple Bloom, and Scootaloo watched Neublar swing back and forth from his trapped state; he was now dangling from a street lamp near in Canterlot's Main Square by a long rope, which was tied around his wrists and ankles, leaving him hanging partially upside down with his limbs and back half in the air. He was grinning sheepishly in embarrassment, his blush making his teal face look bluish-purple. The fog of green-pink gas was almost too thick to see through here, all of the Canterlot Elite caught in the blast had fainted from the stench, their twitching forms littering the streets; one's mane was even on fire.

"Man, that *stinks*!" Scootaloo exclaimed, nearly gagging from the breath she took and losing the stomach for the ice cream cone she had. All three fillies and the amphibiod each had ice cream, which had now melted under the gas into puddles of nasty-looking goo.

"Applejack's not gonna lemme inta the house with t'is stink!" Applebloom exclaimed.

"And I can't even imagine what Rarity's gonna do!" Sweetie Belle gasped.

"I said I was sorry, what more can I do?" Neublar exclaimed pitifully, swinging back and forth from his position.

"Clear up this mess, maybe?" Spyro asked as he hovered above the scene. No sooner did he say those words did he take another deep breath, the back of his throat beginning to glow with a sliver-white light as whisps of visible wind formed in the air around his mouth, being sucked into his mouth in a swirling motion. Once charged, he fired a ball of concentrated wind at the center of town near the fountain, where it exploded upon contact, creating an blast of wind that spread out in all direction, blasting away the stink cloud and clearing the air around Canterlot once more.

Neublar immediately perked up when he saw the purple dragon. "Hey, Spyro! The Cutie Mark Crusaders and I were looking *everywhere* for you." He stated, now spinning around like a top on a string thanks to the wind.

Spyro slowly hovered down before landing on all fours in front of Neublar, watching the frogape swing about in amusement; the light post he was hanging from was bending and twisting under Neublar's weight. "Let me guess: Brain Freeze, again?" The purple dragon asked.

"Yep." Neublar stated flatly just as Twilight and Spike arrived on the scene. They braked to a stop to see Spyro slashing the ropes wrapped around the feet of the strange 'monster' that the Cutie Mark Crusaders had roped up, releasing it.

The creature before Spyro was a Pegalus-class monster, resembling a cross between a gorilla and a salamander, roughly the height, size and weight of the Pokémon Kangaskhan, standing upright at nine feet tall and measuring fifteen feet from head to tailtip; he was half-a-head taller than Spyro and bigger by mass, but much shorter by length and still shorter than Princess Celestia. His over-all body structure was that of a primate, most like a gorilla: humaniod, with large shoulders and a broad chest, along with a strong back and a big pot belly; his overall bulk was massive, easily being more than twice Spyro's weight, his muscle beefed up to crazy size and his belly and bodyfat bloating him out and smoothing out most of his muscle mass. His hind legs were thick, strong yet flexible, and they ended in large, flat, frog-like feet with four webbed toes. His arms were three times long than his legs and were thick as small tree trunks, ending in a strong hand with four fingers and one thumb each, also webbed. From his rear sprouted a thick, powerful tail as long as his arm, ending in a large, whale-like flipper. His head was like a gorilla's in structure, mounted on a neck that, while thick and strong, was slightly longer and thinner than most apes, his head having a large dome on top, thick eyebrows and flat nostrils, and a thick lower jaw/chin, but he also had webbed ears and a pair or large, stag-like antlers growing from his head just above his ears. He also had three eyes, two in the normal spots on his face and one in between and just above the other two. He was covered from head to toe in thick, shaggy fur like an Orangutan's, minus his face, stomach, hands, feet, and tail-flipper. His skin was a deep teal-green in color, while his fur was a deep dark blue; the fur on his back was a lighter, cyan-blue in color, showing his status as a 'Cyan-Back'. His eyes were grassy-green in color, much like pony or human eyes, with round pupils.

"Thanks for helping me find Spyro, girls." Neublar told the Cutie Mark Crusaders as he dusted off his arms. "Oh, Spyro. These are-"

"Applebloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Belle." Spyro stated flatly, looking a little cross. "Yes. We've met." He turned to the three fillies. "But the question is what are you three doing in Canterlot?"

"We followed you and Twah'light here hopin' to catch you." Applebloom admitted sheepishly. "Ya were goin' on ta steal Princess Celestia's gems and we wanted ta try and git our Cutie Marks as Dragon Capturers. T'at's when we found Neublar here."

Neublar then looked around the city."Canterlot, is it? Is this where you dragons go for the migration, 'cause I haven't seen any dragons besides you and the little guy on the purple girl's back." He stated, pointing at Spike.

"This world, yes. This place, no. This is Canterlot, the capital city of the kingdom and world of Equestria." Spyro explained, both of them ignoring the terror-filled looks most ponies were giving them. "This world is where the dragon's migrate too during the Great Dragon Migration."

"It's nice here." Neublar commited; he then clapped his hands together. "So, how was the migration, and what are you doing here away from the other dragons?"

Spyro then took the next five minutes explaining to Neublar the recent events that happened during the migration; how he was introduced to Princess Celestia and the bearers of the Elements of Harmony, then being assigned to Celestia's teaching of Magic under Twilight's tutorship, and how he was currently living in PonyVille with Twilight and her friends. He also explained how Savagera had arrived earlier by unknown means, and how he was now able to assume the form of an alicorn through magic; he also gave Neublar a basic understanding of the world of talking ponies, from Pony Races to Cutie Marks.

"Hmmmm..." Neublar hummed in thought, stroking his fur-covered chin with his fingers in thought. "That is odd." He said at last. "Just before I scaled the mountain to this city, I encountered both a Rathalos and a Gobul in the EverFree Forest. The latter nearly took off my tail in the process." He stated, looking back at said appendage in painful remembrance. "And I don't even remember how I got there; I merely just woke up in the forest before running into those monsters."

Spyro was frowning hard, a dark look of worried thought over his face. "So not only are you and Savagera here, but the monsters of Prehistoria have begun to appear in EverFree?" He asked.

The frogape nodded. "Looks that way; if this continues the way it is, then it's only a matter of time before all the Skylanders and many more monsters arrive in this world by whatever means and reasons." He told his dragon friend and leader, he then looked thoughtful again. "At the rate this order is going, I'm guessing Harry and Venom are next to arrive, and maybe even Melody would, being able to become a black dragon Skylander like us..." He then blinked. "...well, like us of the Skylanders, not being black dragons."

Spyro sighed; and this day was going so well. Well, it's nice to have Neublar around to hang out with.

"Ummmm...excuse me?" Twilight, who had remained quiet for the entire conversation, finally spoke up. "But are you another one of Spyro's friends?"

Neublar looked down at the purple unicorn. "You're Twilight Sparkle, right?" He asked with a grin; he took her small hoof in his large hands, shaking it gently...though Twilight still felt like her arm was about to rip off. "A sincere pleasure to make your acquaintance! I'm Neublar Z. Frogface, Spore-Elemental Skylander from Prehistoria."

"T-T-The p-p-pleasure's a-a-all m-m-mine." Twilight stammered as the vibrations of the handshake rattled through her body, disorienting her voice.

Neublar noticed this, quickly releasing the mare's hoof with a sheepish grin. "Sorry. I've gotten used to handling creatures my own size and strength for a while now." He said apologetically.

Twilight smiled as she held her sore hoof to her chest; at least this one was friendly. "It's okay." She told him. "I'm just glad to meet someone from Prehistoria that's not all...well...you know."

Neublar nodded knowingly. "I see you've met Savagera, as Spyro mentioned." He stated before sighing. "Yeah, Savagera was never the easiest to feel comfortable around. At least you ponies are nice."

Twilight frowned. "And it was the Cutie Mark Crusaders who strung you up on the...light post?" She asked, eyeing the now-twisted light post oddly.

"Oh, don't worry. I asked them to do it." Neublar assured her with a rather goofy-looking grin. "We stopped for Ice Cream and I got Brain Freeze; I asked them to string me up upside-down so that the blood to rush to my brain and kill my freeze faster."

Twilight cocked an eyebrow in confusion. "That actually works?" She asked.

"I dunno." Neublar admitted. "My head usually goes numb before I can tell." He stated, slightly slapping the side of his head in the process. "Anywho, it's off to PonyVille, right?" The frogape then asked, looking about at all the recovering ponies. "I think we better go before somepony calls the local animal control." He stated as the mare with the burning mane ran past them screaming, hair still on fire.

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "You said some'pony' instead of some'body'." The dragon stated.

Neublar blinked in realization. "Yeah, I don't know why. Everytime I try to say some...'body', I just say somepony instead. Same with anypony and everypony." He told Spyro while straining to say 'body' instead of 'pony'. "Is that a natural thing that happens here?"

Spyro shrugged. "I wouldn't know. If it is, it hasn't effected me; I say somebody and the others just fine."

"Must be because you're a dragon." Neublar concluded.

"Uh, guys?" Twilight interrupted, earning their attention. "Just a brief question: Neublar, what do your kinds natural...um...diet?"

"Fruit, vegetables, bamboo, insects and fish, why?" Neublar asked.

"Oh! Well, that's good to know." Twilight stated with sudden cheerfulness. "Well, off to PonyVille then! Come on, Spike!" She said as she grabbed Spike, who had remained silently dumbfounded through the whole conversation, with her magic and set him on her back. "We've

got a train to catch, and we better hurry before the royal guards come and see two giant monsters sitting about in Canterlot like nopony's business!" She said rather quickly as she grabbed Spyro, Neublar, and the Cutie Mark Crusaders with her magic and carried them through the air behind her, all of which looking confused.

PonyVille Train Station, a few hours later:

"Why in Equestria would those three have gone to Canterlot during *this* time of year?" Rarity asked as she, Applejack, Pinkie Pie, Fluttershy, and Rainbow Dash all waited at the train station for the Pony Express to arrive. "The fashion that takes place there during summer is simply *dreadful*!"

"I'm more concerned about t'is 'Neublar' fellow." Applejack stated. "I don't think PonyVille is ready for *another* monster from Spyro's place."

All five of them noticed the absence of their fellow Harmony Element, the two purple dragons, and the three fillies of doomsday, and had spent most of the day looking for them; it was thanks from a letter from Spike arriving at the library did they learn where they were and that they were taking the train back. The letter also told them that they found another of Spyro's friends and that they better prepare themselves for his appearance.

Rainbow Dash snorted. "Yeah, Spyro's bad enough, let alone that Savagera monster." She stated. "And now there bringing a third monster! What's Twilight trying to do, anyway?! Set up some sort of monster zoo here?!"

"That'd actually make a cool movie!" Pinkie Pie chirped happily.

Applejack glared at Rainbow Dash. "Savagera and Spyro are both good people, Dragon, Twilodon, or Pony!" She snapped angrily. "If *I* can forgive Savagera for w'at he did, I think you can too!"

The incident of discovering Savagera's true form was not a pleasant one. It had begun when Rainbow Dash had discovered Savagera in his true form when he was helping Applejack clear large boulders from the southern fields the other day; as expected, none of the other ponies had been thrilled with this discovery, especially Twilight and Rainbow Dash, the former because Spyro had lied to her, and the latter because this monster was roaming free without paying for its crimes. Spyro and Applejack explained what had happened and, with a lot of convincing (and even a bit of threatening) on their part, managed to satisfy the girls enough to let him go, but everyone had been left rather bitter the rest of the day.

Applejack sighed, recalling the talk she had that convinced them to give the panther/tiger a chance.

Sweet Apple Acres, two days ago:

"I can't believe you're actually letting that thing live after what it did to you!" A frustrated Twilight exclaimed as Applejack calmly returned to her apple-bucking, ignoring the five upset ponies near her. Spyro was busy removing the magic shard from Savagera and putting it back into his own chest, under the demanding of Savagera; the Twilodon didn't want it anymore since he didn't need it. The true form of the two monsters together were making the tension of both sides even worse.

Applejack struck the tree with her hind hooves, causing the apples to fall into the basket. "Why *not*?" Applejack asked. "It may have been terrible, but it was all a misunderstandin'; he made a mistake and came back and fixed it. It's as simple as t'at."

"IT IS *NOT*!" Rainbow Dash yelled angrily, clearly boiling with it. "That monster nearly *KILLED* you, Applejack! And you're just letting it go, just like that?!"

"Darling, I simply must agree with Rainbow Dash for once." Rarity told her, also looking angry. "This thing nearly claimed your life and obviously won't hesitate killing anypony else should need be. Are you really going to trust that thing?"

"Why would you want to forgive him after what he did to you?" Fluttershy asked timidly; she was the only one of the group that wasn't angry as she was frightened and concerned.

Applejack sighed. "Girls, I know yer upset. I was too...but I was willin' ta look at the bigger picture." She explained, looking them dead in the eye with the wisest, most serious face the earth pony could muster. "If you want ta bear a grudge, go right ahead, but before ya make any moves, ask yerself once question: Does killin' a creature that tried to kill ya make ya any better than him?"

"Well..." Twilight began, but no one could answer that question in a way that was both satisfactory yet truthful.

"I know it's hard, but you *can* let it go." The orange pony explained. "Besides, we all forgave Spike when he destroyed half the town, stole everypony's things, and nearly got Rarity and himself killed when he became a giant drag'n, didn we?"

"That's different." Rarity stated. "Spike's our friend."

"*Is* it?" Applejack asked. "Spike was just doin' what drag'ns naturally do. So was Savagera here, and he's Spyro's friend as much as Spike is ours."

"AAAAAAUGH!" Rainbow Dash screamed in frustration, grabbing at the sides of her head. "What is *wrong* with you ponies?! If you *idiots* are just going to let this beast get away with nearly killing our friend, then I'll-"

"Getting away with what?" Spyro asked, having enough of the cyan pegasus. "Doing what his kind naturally does? Looking for food? You know, you're beginning to sound like a *human* right about now."

Boy, was *that* the wrong thing to say. "You *Shut Up*! You're just as bad as him! And I wouldn't talk about being *human* if I were you!" Rainbow Dash screamed angrily, her blue face now red with rage.

"Rainbow!" Twilight shouted.

"Enough." Savagera's telepathic voice broke the fight before it went any further, the Twilodon said as he stepped forward. *"Stop this before someone says something they'll regret for all time."* He turned his attention to Twilight. *"I know you're upset and angered by my actions, and that you desire revenge, but is it truly worth ruining your alliance and friendship with each other to do so? I have no ill intentions with your kind, and if you be willing, we can end this now and become allies instead of enemies, and no more blood needs to be spilled."*

"How can you expect us to trust you?" Twilight asked, eyeing him warily.

"I don't. Allow me to earn *your trust, and then allow me to join your kind in peace."*

No one said anything for a long time, everyone glancing about at each other and looking deep in thought, some of them with glares...until Fluttershy's soft voice finally broke the silence.

"They're right." She said softly, though all heard it. "If we forgave a giant dragon for destroying our homes and stealing our stuff, then we can forgive Savagera for attacking our friend if he came back and fixed what he did wrong, right?"

Rarity sighed, giving in. "I suppose I could as well." She admitted. "After all, if I of all ponies could forgive Spike for what he did to me, I guess I can give Spyro's friend a chance."

"Me too." Pinkie Pie agreed, her hair returning to it's usual poofiness. "I can forgive a meanie mean pants whose sorry for being meanie mean. Besides, I can throw a 'everything's back to normal and everypony's forgiven' party to make everyone feel better."

Twilight looked hesitant at first, but in the end gave in. "Okay...we'll let it go." She said in a submissive tone. "...but if I hear of *anything*, even the smallest thing, you're gonna regret stepping foot in this world. Okay?"

Savagera wasn't impressed nor intimidated by her threat, but nodded anyway.

"Thanks, Twilight." Spyro said gratefully.

"Fine! Go ahead! Trust these freaks! And when they turn on you and tear you limb from limb, don't come crying to me!" Rainbow Dash spat, finally having enough, before blasting off into the sky without so much as a farewell, leaving the others to sigh in both relief and regret.

Since then Savagera had been staying in Everfree Forest or the orchards Sweet Apple Acres in his true form, only wondering into PonyVille for certain occasions. Rumors of a large, shadowy cat roaming the forest's edge now filled PonyVille's streets and houses, only fueling the natural fear ponies had for the mysterious forest. The apple family were also aware of Savagera's presence; Big Macintosh got into a fight with the cat, thinking along the same thoughts Rainbow Dash had, but wound up getting his flank handed to him and receiving more than a few scratches to remember the Twilodon by. Most of the ponies avoided him when they could, but a few like Fluttershy and Twilight began to warm up to him as they had with Spyro, even if Rainbow Dash still held a grudge against both of the monsters.

'Let's just hope this new one's not as mean as the others.' Applejack thought to herself.

"Ooh, Look! There's the train!" Pinkie Pie announced excitedly, pointing down the track to where the train was spotted heading their way. The Pony Express braked to a stop with the traditional screech of metal wheels on metal rails and the release of steam, the passenger cars stopping right in front of them.

"Well, here goes nuthin'." Applejack muttered to herself.

Rainbow Dash didn't wait; she zoomed over to the car door and pounded on it. "Okay, Spyro, open up! Where is she! Did you ditch her somewhere? Where are you holding her? Are you a-"

"Hi there!" Neublar said as he zoomed out the car with a excited grin, almost tearing out the doorway in the process. Rainbow Dash, who was directly in front of his three-eyed face, screamed in alarm and instinctively punched the frog-ape in the nose. "*YEOW, ME SNOSHH!*!" He cried as he fell backwards onto the floor with a crash; the entire building shook from the impact.

"For Celestia's sake, Rainbow, did you have to *hit* it?!" Rarity exclaimed as they watched Neublar's belly jiggle from the impact. Rainbow Dash blushed with a sheepish grin.

"Oh my goodness! Are you okay?" Fluttershy asked softly as she flew over to his head.

"I thwink she's brooke my shnose!" Neublar whined as he held his nose with his hands, eyes squeezed shut.

"Hey girls, how are-" Twilight began as she, Spike, Spyro, and the Cutie Mark Crusaders exited the train, only to stop when they saw a knocked-out Neublar laying on his back with a fretting Fluttershy tending to his nose. "Okay, what did Rainbow do this time."

"She punched him in the face!" Pinkie Pie stated.

"*Rainbow*!" Twilight scolded.

"Hey, can you blame me?" She asked with indignity. "I was expecting either Twilight or Spyro to come out and instead I'm greeted by a giant, frog/monkey thing with *three* eyes! I did what anypony would've done."

"I wouldn't have done that." Fluttershy stated timidly.

"Whatever."

"And you three!" Applejack then said sternly, she and Rarity turning to Applebloom and her friends with authoritive glares, the three younger fillies lowering their gazes in shame. "Just what were ya three thinkin' goin' after Twah'light and Spyro all the way ta Canterlot like that?"

"We were just trying to get our cutie marks by being drag'n capturers." Applebloom admitted.

"Yeah, we didn't mean any harm." Sweetie Belle told her big sister.

"Well, the gesture was nice, but I believe Twilight can handle any problem with her dragons should they misbehave." Rarity told them. "From now on let Twilight handle Spyro."

"I am *not Twilight's* dragon!" Spyro snarled sternly. "I am *Melody's* dragon!"

"Whichever suits you!"

The next sound was the giggling of Pinkie Pie as she bounced up and down on Neublar's bloated belly like a trampoline, his belly making the classic deep 'boing' with each bounce. "Hey! It's like a big, squishy, bouncy-house!" She squealed with delight.

Spyro paled, his eyes widening in horror.

"*Not the stomach*!" He cried, but it was too late, the bubbling sound from Neublar's lower belly warning Spyro to cover his nose.

PPHHWWAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNTT!

"AAAAAAAHHH!" The sound of screaming girls accompanying the blast of pink-green gas erupting from the doors and windows of the train station; it was the same cloud and stench Twilight recognized from Canterlot...and it came when Neublar...expelled internal gases. Soon the nine ponies came spilling out of the station, gasping for fresh air and all with green faces...except Fluttershy, who was only slightly disgusted by the smell. All the ponies nearby took one whiff of the stench before bolting for the hills while screaming or passing out on the spot.

"AUGH! MY MOUTH WAS OPEN!" Rainbow Dash screeched, gagging on the smell.

"OH, IT SMELLS WORSE THAN FROGGY BOTTOM BOG!" Rarity shrieked.

"EEEEEEWWW! STINKY STINKY STINK!" Pinkie Pie squealed.

"I think I'm gonna be sick." Applejack moaned in pain; the farm mare certainly seemed sick.

Neublar could only grimace with embarrassment. "Sorry about that; that's just a medical condition with by stink gas glands in my colon." He admitted, rubbing the back of his head as the ponies continued to choke. "It's a natural defense my kind has, like shunks, but I can't really control when it goes off. It does it automatically when I...you know, *break wind*."

"He doesn't smell *that* bad." Fluttershy offered.

That came as a surprise to everyone. "You *really* don't mind?" Neublar asked hopefully.

"You *can't* be serious!" Rainbow Dash stated flatly.

"Oh, well...um...maybe it is." Fluttershy admitted. "But I don't mind it that much...you see, I help take care of animals with their own scent weapons, such as skunks and minks, so I've kinda gotten use to smells like that."

"That was even *worse* than skunks!" Twilight wheezed as they caught up, the smell finally fading from the planet's atmosphere, allowing everyone in PonyVille to breathe again. "Sheesh! Well, from now on we'll make sure Pinkie Pie stays *far away* from him, *okay*?" She asked, her voice directed in Pinkie Pie's direction.

"Awwwwwww..." Pinkie Pie whined.

"Sorry." Neublar said sheepishly.

Spyro chuckled as he approached Neublar from behind, laying a claw on the primate's shoulder. "Come on. Let's see if we can find you a place to stay here." He told him.

"Sure thing. But where?" Neublar asked. "I don't think I can stay with you and Twilight, she already having one of us to look after, and I don't think I'll do well with Savagera in that Everfree Forest you told me about. I'd also like to work here, at least so that I'm not just being a big parasite to everypony." He had given up trying to correct the pony/body reversal in his speech; he actually kinda liked it.

"He could stay with me." Fluttershy offered; they all turned their attention to her, which made her back up a bit in shyness. "Um...I actually have a spare bedroom in my cottage he could stay at, and I do need a little help around the place...and I'll pay well..." She said in her timid, shy tone, but wanting to help if at all possible.

"No offense, dear, but how?" asked Rarity, to her knowledge, Fluttershy didn't get paid a great deal for her job, but, despite her skills with animals, hadn't asked for more than she needed. Fluttershy had no real desire for money and Rarity had never known her to seek it.

"I saved up a lot..." Fluttershy began, blushing heavily. "...F-From when I was a model..." she muttered quietly, looking down. "I've got quite a bit actually..."

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "*You* were a *model*?" He asked with surprise; timid little Fluttershy? "I find that hard to believe."

"Yes, with Photo Finish." Rarity, remembering her own...*unsavory* behavior during the whole incident. "That was some time ago, though."

Fluttershy nodded in her usual meek way. "Yes, but I really hated it, and I hardly ever hate anything...but I saved up the money incase it'd come in handy, I'd be glad to give Neublar some work...that is, if he wants too."

"What kind of work is it?" Neublar asked.

"Helping me take care of animals." Fluttershy told him. "Unless...you don't want to, that is..."

The amphibiod shook his head with a smile. "No, not at all. I'm good with animals." He said reassuringly. "Even better if there the type that doesn't try to eat me."

"I dunno. That rabbit she has just might. He certainly looks like he wants too." Spyro stated; all the girls and Spike laughed at his joke, minus Fluttershy, who didn't find it very funny at all. Neublar only looked confused.

8. Griffon the Brush Off

CHAPTER VII: GRIFFON THE BRUSH OFF

PonyVille, Morning:

Rainbow Dash was not in the best of moods today.

She was at her usual spot of lounging on the low-hanging cloud above PonyVille, above the market place near the bookstore, where she was trying to take her mid-morning nap...but the current presence of a certain large, purple, jerk-headed reptilian in pony clothing was irritating her. Said jerk was down near the bookstore with his egg-headed leash holder browsing the nearby window of new books.

In normal words, Spyro was merely accompanying Twilight as he usually did, though Rainbow Dash always found an excuse to boil in anger at him.

It had been only two days since Neublar arrived, but already most of PonyVille was warming up to him. His kind and brotherly nature helped to ease the tension that Savagera had brought upon them, and he had proved himself a big help around PonyVille; he had incredible strength, even more than Big Macintosh, that was put to good use with carrying heavy things and holding

large object in place while ponies would fasten it down. Yet despite his strength, he was gentle as a butterfly, and almost everypony had come to like him...along with Spyro.

It was thanks to Pinkie Pie the word that Spyro was a legendary breed of powerful purple dragons that were born once every ten generations had leaked out to the public. Now the cyan pegasus couldn't go anywhere without hearing some sort of whisper or murmurs of the 'rare purple dragon' or 'the legendary chosen dragon' or 'all powerful dragon of legend'...purple dragon, purple dragon, purple dragon...that's all she ever heard nowadays!

Rainbow Dash growled under her breath as she watched Spyro standing next to Twilight, just sitting there looking *sooooo* 'proud and majestic', *lounging* under all the awed stares he was receiving; *sure*, he looked all humble and stuff, but Rainbow Dash could tell he was no good! He was just a stuck-up, self-righteous, bad-tempered Glory Hog, that's what he really was! Why couldn't anypony else see that as well?!

'Well, this is one pegasus that purple punk isn't gonna fool, not in a million years!' She claimed to herself.

"Hi! I'm looking for Rainbow Dash! Have you seen her?"

'Uh Oh!' Rainbow Dash thought to herself when she heard the voice of Pinkie Pie herself; if there was one pony more aggravating than Spyro, it was her! She was so annoying and just wouldn't leave well enough alone!

She quickly began digging into the cloud she was sitting on in an attempt to bury herself inside it and hide, stuffing her upper half into the cloud as Pinkie continued bouncing around the market, asking ponies there if they had seen her. "Hi there! Have you seen Rainbow Dash? O-Okay, thanks anyway!"

Twilight and Spyro were still window browsing when Pinkie Pie zoomed over to them. "Twilight, have you seen Rainbow Dash anywhere?" She asked the purple unicorn.

"Isn't she right up there?" Twilight asked, motioning upwards. Pinkie Pie and Spyro looked up to see, much to Spyro's surprise and amusement, a cyan rump with a rainbow-colored tail sticking out of the cloud above them.

"Rainbow Daaaaaash!" Pinkie Pie called in a happy, sing-song tone.

'Darn it!' Rainbow Dash mentally shrieked as she pulled herself out of the cloud; faster than the eye could follow, she took off toward Sweet Apple Acres, leaving a streak of rainbow colors behind her. Pinkie Pie stared after her before simply bouncing at her normal pace after her, completely unaffected by the pegasus' response.

"What was *that* all about?" Spyro asked as they watched Pinkie Pie bounce off in the direction Rainbow Dash went. "And how did you know Rainbow was above us."

"She had been following us for the past hour or so." Twilight told him with a sigh, turning back to the bookstore. "I think she was spying on you; to make sure you're not up to something."

The purple kirin sighed himself. Ever since he met the ponies back on dragon mountain, a little less than two weeks ago, he and Rainbow Dash had *not* been on very good terms. She obviously had some sort of ego involving how tough and fast she was, which he had badly damaged during their first encounter and by the potential of his power; she had warmed up to his presence during the first few days, but certain events in the following days cancelled that pleasant thought. Her landing on his face with her privates directly in his view increased anger and humiliation for the pegasus, and Savagera's true form a few days ago shattered her trust completely and helped to fuel her suspicions about him. Little need to say: he was number one on the rainbow-maned pegasus' pissed-off-at-o-meter.

Twilight noticed his disheartened look. "Don't worry; she'll come around. She always does." She assured him.

"I'm sure she does, but none of you ponies ever had to be friends with a grown dragon before, either." Spyro stated back, using his magic to levitate Twilight's saddlebags onto his own back to carry them for her. "And even then we got off to a rather rough start. Now I can't go anywhere without her following me like some hungry vulture just waiting for me to do something that'll give her an excuse to pound me into mush."

"That's true." Twilight admitted as they began the journey back to the library. "Well, just give her some time."

"I sure hope so." Spyro admitted. "Cause it feels like she's stalking me or something."

The lavender unicorn snorted a giggle. "Rainbow? A stalker?" She asked. "For some reason, I can both see and not see that happening."

Spyro merely chuckled alongside the unicorn's giggles as the reached the library, entering to the usual sight of seeing Spike sweeping the floor while fawning over a picture of Rarity on the nearby shelf. After the whole manly self-denial of a red-cheeked (and strangely hiccuping) Spike, followed by the laughter of the two watching him, Twilight and her embarrassed baby dragon headed upstairs to begin a magic/science experiment for the Royal Equestria Academy, the branch of Princess Celestia's government responsible for higher education, science, and research, while Spyro re-assumed dragon form and continued his lessons of Equestria's history, zoology and sciences.

The progress with Spyro's magic lessons had been coming along well; under the instructions from Princess Celestia, Spyro was assigned to begin lessons of Eqeustria's history and science to gain a basic understanding of the world and its important events and properties. At first, Spyro was hesitant, not really eager to start a pony's version of school, but soon he found this

world's history amazing and interesting: it was more like a cool fantasy novel than it was a boring history lesson, thanks to this world practically being a magical fantasy land with equally magical fantasy creatures, places, physics, etc.

That was one reason he dropped out of school while he was still human to become a Pokemon Trainer: they *never* taught you anything interesting or *useful* that you would use in real life, other than Pokemon Zoology! The least they could've done was sizzle it up a bit to keep the student's attention spans for more than a few seconds!

A few hours later, the purple dragon found himself amongst a pile of stacked books reading about the reign of Discord. His encounter with draconequus' statue had left him asking many questions about the time before Celestia and Luna's rise to power; he learned that Discord used his chaotic powers to transform the world into a bizzare, chaotic realm where nothing made sense...and where many ponies suffered under his personal amusement. Some of the more commonly known alterations he made were:

Cotton Candy Clouds that rained Chocolate Milk
Floating islands with reversed gravity
Physically altered animals, such as deer-legged rabbits and ballet-dancing buffalo
Pies raining from the skies
Soap-Made Roads
Complete Reversal of Pony's Personalities, often into a corrupted state

These were only a few changes he made upon the world, which obviously messed up nature and the very foundation of the planet itself, leaving ponies to starve from lack of food and to live in constant terror and even pain thanks to these changes. Sure, they would look funny in a cartoon or something, but for life these warped realities could bring much torment and agony to those living there...all for the personal amusement of a black-hearted monster.

But as the story goes, the regal pony sisters, Celestia and Luna, discovered the long-lost Elements of Harmony, the most powerful force of magic in this universe, and defeated the tyrannical Spirit of Chaos, sealing him away forever in stone. It was even foretold as The Alicorn Prophecies by Star Swirl the Bearded, the most famous wizard of Equstria's Round Stable:

"And so I say unto thee, persevere my brothers and sisters! Do not lose hope. For this I have seen in the stars: The day is coming when two sisters shall be born. And they shall have the combined powers of the unicorn, the pegasus, and the earth pony. Their power shall be multiplied a thousand times a thousand fold. Then shall they do battle with he that causes chaos, and they shall strike him down. They shall render him powerless and they shall bind him in stone for an age. Then shall the two sisters take up the throne of Equestria and rule with peace, love, and wisdom. Power over the very forces that drive the Universe shall be theirs. Even the sun and moon shall bow before them. Keep watch, my fellow ponies! For our deliverance draws nigh."

— Excerpt from The Alicorn Prophecies as written by Star Swirl the Bearded in the year 36 BCL (Before Celestia and Luna)

BOOM!

"GAH!" Spyro cried as the explosion shook the entire library, knocking the dragon up off the floor and backwards into a pile of books with a crash. It came from above! Quickly scrambling back up onto his feet, his bounded up the staircase to the next floor and burst into the room. "What's happened?!"

The room was a complete mess. Every inch of the floor, walls, and ceiling were covered in this grape-purple smudge, as if a bomb of purple smog exploded in there...and the center point of the said explosion was the table near the center of the room, which had shattered remains of glass containers of multiple chemicals staining the floor. He spotted Spike plastered against the wall when the baby dragon opened his eyes, groaning in pain as he slowly peeled off the wall and landed facefirst on the floor, leaving a clean, Spike-shaped hole in the purple mess on the wall.

Suddenly a larger mass fell off the wall above him and landed on his head; his vision was covered by a mass of purple-coated flesh, which opened to reveal a pair of surprised, lavender eyes staring back at him.

"Hello." Spyro stated flatly, cocking an amused eyebrow.

Twilight lifted her head out of his face, blushing slightly as she laid over his head, using her forehooves to hold onto his horns with. "H-Hi." She said nervously; she then looked up at her now-obliterated experiment. "Oh, come on! That took me *days* to set up!" She said in distress.

"What happened?" Spyro asked, approaching the center of the mess, still with the unicorn on his head.

"I was experimenting the creation of mass-increasing potions in an essay for the Royal Equestria Academy." She explained as Spyro lowered his head to the floor, allowing the unicorn to climb off. "I was during the critical part of the potion creating when the wording on my instruction notes just disappeared into thin air, and I distracted by it for too long and the potion self-destructed!"

Spyro examined the ink cartridge, sniffing it. "Invisible Ink." He commented. "I think we've just been pranked."

Suddenly the two heard laughing outside the window; Twilight and Spyro made it to the window just in time to see Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash scampering away from the tree, the latter carrying the true cartridge of ink while both were laughing hysterically.

Twilight growled. "Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash...at once!" She snarled through gritted teeth.

"Hold on. I thought Rainbow Dash was trying to avoid Pinkie Pie." Spyro stated. "Did they decide to hang out by pranking people?"

"I guess so." Spike suddenly spoke up, using his claws to wipe his face clean. "About an hour ago they pranked me by scaring me into getting the hiccups. I think I accidently sent all of PonyVille's documents to Princess Celestia."

"Spike!" Twilight wailed.

Spyro merely sighed, shaking his head. "Come on, Spike. I'll get the broom."

As Twilight and her two dragons were cleaning the library, Rainbow Dash and Pinkie Pie were continuing their rampage of practical pranks on PonyVille's residents. Twilight and Spike were only the first of their victims: already they had pulled one on both Rarity, the unicorn mare receiving a noseful of sneezing powder hidden in a bouquet of flowers, and they also painted all the apples in Sweet Apple Acres and gave Applejack the shock of her life. There had also been a few others around town they had gotten, but none was as funny as the one they pulled on the egghead unicorn and her baby dragon assistant.

Currently they were hiding behind the side of a large hill next to the creek near Fluttershy's cottage, waiting for another unsuspecting victim; this time they had set up a stuff-animal turtle to a squirt pump in the creek, and were just waiting to start squirting. Pinkie Pie was currently holding the squirty pump in her mouth, making it squeak with each of her excited bounces, while Rainbow Dash was spying on the pony near the creek with a large telescope...which so happened to be Fluttershy, who, along with Neublar, were feeding the fish and other aquatic life of the creek.

"Is someone over there?" Pinkie asked excitedly, still holding the squirty pump in her mouth. "Who're we gonna squirt?! Who're we gonna squirt?!"

Rainbow Dash chuckled to herself. "Fluttershy!"

"*WHAT*?!" Pinkie Pie squeaked, quickly spitting out the pump. "Nonononononono! We can't prank Fluttershy! I mean, She's so sensitive! It'll hurt her feelings, even our most harmless prank!"

Rainbow sighed, pulling away from the telescope. "Yeah, you're right..." She admitted, sticking her tongue out afterwards. "Huh, we need another victim made of tougher stuff. So...who's it gonna be?" She asked with eagerness.

Pinkie Pie, however, was already giggling. "Oh, I've got someone in mind." She said, trying hard not to laugh. "The toughest around!"

"Oh, awesome! Who? Who? Do I know them?" Rainbow Dash asked eagerly.

"Oh, yes!" Pinkie Pie laughed, pointing to the creek. "You're very close!" She said as Rainbow Dash looked at her reflection to find, much to her surprise, that the telescope had been rigged, leaving a ring of black ink around her right eye. Rainbow Dash, however, laughed good-heartedly along with the pink-party pony.

"Good one, Pinkie Pie!" She exclaimed...when she suddenly lit up with an idea...a sinister idea. "I've got someone else in mind...someone *really* tough." She said with sarcasm, but in a devilously scheming tone.

Pinkie Pie's smile faded. "You're not talking about Spyro, are you?" She asked in concern.

"Of course I am! And we'll pull a really big one on him, too!" Rainbow Dash said eagerly, using her hoof dipped in water to wipe the ink from her eye. "It oughta show that big jerk a thing or two about humility!"

"*Big jerk*?" Pinkie Pie asked in surprise. "Spyro's not a jerk, Dashie! He a really nice guy! Why, just yesterday, he help me and the Cakes get our super special delivery on time to the train station! Why, if he hadn't helped us, we would've missed the train and lost our really important order!" She said giddily.

Rainbow Dash snorted. "*Sure he is*..." She growled sarcastically. "Come on, Pinkie! You've *gotta* notice that he's faking it! He may *act* nice and 'all super special', but he's just playing you so he can get everypony to go all googly-eyed over him. I can't go anywhere without hearing something about that big show-off! 'Spyro's an awesome dragon'! 'Spyro did this great thing in history'! 'Spyro'! 'Spyro'! 'Spyro'!" She grabbed the side of her head with her hooves. "GAH! I swear, if I hear one more mention about that purple-scaled beast...!" She didn't finish her sentence; she just growled in frustration.

Pinkie Pie, who had remained surprisingly silent through Rainbow Dash's rant, finally spoke. "Ya know, Dashie. If I was a super-smart-smarty-pants pony like Twilight, I'd say you could possibly be the teeniest-tiniest bit *jealous* of Spyro." She said in a calm yet happy manner.

"*JEALOUS*?!" Rainbow Dash shrieked, looking both enraged and shocked beyond belief. "OF *HIM*?! Never in a million years!"

"Well, even if you're not, I don't think Spyro's *trying* to be a big show-off." Pinkie Pie told her. "He's a really nice dragon! The nicest dragon I've ever met, except for maybe Spike, but still one of the nicest dragons ever!"

Rainbow Dash huffed, but she actually did take Pinkie's words seriously. But she was *still* gonna keep an eye on him, *just in case*...

Next Morning, PonyVille Library:

Twilight woke up as the sun was just starting to rise, sniffing the air curiously. Whatever the smell was that came to her nose smelled delicious. She crawled out of bed and went over to her dresser, looking at her mane and giving it a quick brushing so she at least looked half way presentable before starting to climb down from her loft, sniffing the air again as she made her way downstairs into the kitchen. She found, much to her surprise, that it was Spyro that had set the table and was cooking.

"Spyro...*You're* making breakfast?" She asked, blinking in slight surprise. "Do you need any help?"

"No thanks; I can handle it." He told her. "You just sit down and make yourself comfortable." He said as he continued working as he quickly went to pour Twilight a cup of coffee. "Breakfast is almost ready." he placed the coffee in front of her and then went back to work at the stove.

"Thanks?" She said, blinking at him again, before just watching him curiously as he worked at the stove. Spike came in behind her, and he looked just as surprised.

He used his hands to pour the pancake batter from the bowl, but instead of putting the pan onto the stove...he lightly tossed the pan in the air above his head, tilting his head upwards and blasting forth a small stream of flame from his jaws, much to Twilight surprise and awed wonder, that kept the pan afloat for a few seconds before he cut his flame off and caught the pan with his hands. Twilight flinched at the sight, but reminded herself that dragons could withstand *Molten Lava*; an oven-hot pan was probably *cold* to them.

He continued working for a little bit longer, in the same theatrical way, before placing pancakes, eggs, hash-browns, and toast on multiple of the plates, which he carried with his wings and took it over to her, setting them down on the table in front of her, along with a fresh glass of apple cider.

"Breakfast is served." He said with a grin.

"Wow! That was awesome! Great work, Spyro!" Spike said in an amazed tone, clapping his hands and then drooling at the sight and smell of breakfast.

Twilight, however, just blinked again and gave him a confused look. "Thank you, Spyro...this was really nice of you...but I have to ask: Why are you doing this? If a stallion makes a full breakfast for a mare, it usually means he's trying to make up for something he feels guilty about." She gave a bit of a nervous laugh and looked at him again.

Spyro cast aside a guilty look. "Actually, it is a bit of a guilty-repentance act." He admitted. "I wanted to say thanks for everything you've done since I got here: housing me, feeding me, taking care of me, teaching me how to use magic...I can tell it's a lot of work for you, and I wanted to do something to say thanks for it."

Twilight looked shocked, not really having expected that from him. Then she smiled softly. "*Spyro*...Thank you. I really appreciate it, but you don't have to feel bad about that. It's my duty to the princess; she covers all my work and makes it worth while." She assured him.

"Perhaps, but either way, I feel like I should at least do something nice in return for your hospitality." Spyro told her.

"Well...alright. Thank you." She said with a smile, before she and Spike dug into the breakfast he had made. "This is really good, Spyro. The pancakes and eggs especially."

"Thanks." Spyro said, looking slightly relieved. "I've never really cooked anything before, being a hunter and eater of raw flesh and all that-"

"Please! I'm eating!" Spike snapped with his mouthful of food.

Spyro shook his head in amused annoyance. "-so I wasn't sure exactly how they would turn out."

Twilight was very surprised. "Wow...*not bad* for your first try!" She exclaimed. "You're a *natural*!"

Spyro was about to say thanks, when the door suddenly burst open and an upset-looking Pinkie Pie came running in. "TWILIGHT! TWILIGHT! TWILIGHT!" Pinkie Pie screamed, rushing into the kitchen and nearly crashing into the unicorn in question.

Twilight glared at the pink earth pony. "Pinkie Pie! *Not now*! I am *not* in the mood for another one of your pranks!" Twilight snarled, digging her fork into her pancake with extra force than intended. "Not after having to spend all day cleaning up the mess made from the last one!"

"No! No! I promise I'm not pranking you! Pinkie Promise!" Pinkie Pie assured her, making all the motions.

Twilight sighed. "Alright, what's wrong?" She asked, taking a bite from her toast.

"Rainbow Dash has this griffin friend named Gilda and she's being a *REALLY* BIG MEANIE!" Pinkie Pie told her, putting emphesis on the last part of her sentence.

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "Griffin? You have griffins here in Equestria?" He asked in interest.

"They're a race that lives in their own kingdom outside of Equestria in the mountain regions, but sometimes they come over to mingle with us ponies. Pinkie Pie, are you sure that this friend of Rainbow Dash is *really* so mean?" Twilight asked as she continued eating.

"Um...*YEAH*! She keeps stealing Rainbow Dash away, she popped my balloons, and she told me to buzz off! I've never met a griffin this mean! Well, actually, I've never met a griffin at all, but I bet if I had, she wouldn't have been as mean and grumpy as Gilda!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed.

Spyro listened on as Pinkie Pie continued to rant about how mean this 'Gilda' was. Despite the pink pony's rather rude description of this Gilda, it sounded just like a Griffin to Spyro. In Prehistoria, Griffins were very common in the mountains and/or highlands, usually with wide open plains with large herd mammals to eat. They were actually a lot like dragons: they hoard treasure in their nests, and despite being able to speak and being practically sentinent, they prefer the life of savage, predatory animals. He knew one griffin personally as a friend: a female griffin and fellow skylander named Sonic Boom. But unlike this Gilda was sounding, Sonic Boom was naturally soft and good natured, maybe even a little shy around newcomers; not nearly as bad as Fluttershy, but certainly not like this Gilda character.

"You know what I think, Pinkie Pie?" Twilight asked, finishing her cider off.

"Hmm?"

"Well, I think...you're jealous."

"JEALOUS?" Pinkie Pie nearly screamed; oh, the irony...

"Green with Envy." Spike added, who was listening on to the conversation. "Well, in your case, Pink with Envy..."

"Well, yes...Jealous." Twilight continued, trying to sound soft and reassuring. "Listen, Pinkie, I don't want to upset you, but just because Rainbow Dash has another friend doesn't make Gilda a grump. I mean, perhaps it's you, Pinkie, who needs to improve her attitude." She told her.

"Improve *my* attitude?! But I... D... B.. Th... " Pinkie Pie continued stuttering. "Gilda's a...D...Are you seri-...ERRGH!" She screamed with frustration before storming out the library, making squeaky sounds with each step, and slamming the door behind her.

"Wow..." Spyro finally said. "I've never seen Pinkie Pie so upset..."

"Well Pinkie was having so much fun with Rainbow Dash, she probably just got really jealous when she saw Rainbow Dash with her other friend." Twilight stated, using her magic to lift the empty dishes off the table and carry them to the kitchen. "Especially a friend that can fly with Rainbow and keep her off the ground and away from Pinkie."

"Perhaps..." Spyro stated; her suddenly got up. "I'll go talk with her; maybe I can cheer her up." He finally said, following Pinkie out the door.

"Good Luck!" Twilight called after him. She then sighed. *'You may need it...'*

Fluttershy's Cottage:

Neublar awoke to the usual sounds of the birds chirping in the morning, along with the sounds of numerous other animals. He opened his three eyes to see the morning light seeping in

through the nearby window next to his bed. He was currently in the guest bedroom that Fluttershy was generous enough to give him, and even though the bed was slightly small for him and slightly creaking under his weight, he certainly had a pleasant night's sleep in what felt like could be the safest house in the universe.

The cottage looked as if it had been built underneath a growing bush, almost like it was part of the landscape around it. Nature just emerged from every cranny, and looked absolutely beautiful in the spring. The small stream ran in front of it, having a charming wooden bridge to cross it with, and the trees surrounding were green as green could be and full of animal homes and birds nest. There seemed to be at least a dozen homes for animals: bird houses, rabbit holes, hanging from trees or acting as part of the house.

Fluttershy really did like her critters.

After making the bed back up, Neublar made his way to the living room, taking care to not knock over and break something with his massive size and girth. The rooms, though, were very tall and large, as if it was built for animals of his size. Probably for the larger animals Fluttershy would bring in to tend to wounds.

Question was: where was the little cream-colored pegasus now?

He got his answer from the sound of buzzing coming from the backyard. When he made his way out to the backyard, he didn't see anything at first in the grass covered plain, until the sound of something buzzing got his attention. He headed to the left a little more until he found a pretty big beehive, with Fluttershy sitting in front of it. Fluttershy, was...talking to the bees? He heard bits and pieces of what she was saying over the buzzing, but he didn't really care about her words and paid no attention to them.

Fluttershy was sitting near the bees, but for some reason she wasn't being attacked or stung.

She had another flower basket (how many did she have anyway?) with her and was handing some brightly colored flowers to them. "Here you go, little bees." She said in the soft tone he had come to know already. "There's plenty of pollen for everyone. Be sure to make plenty of honey this year for me, and for yourselves to! Don't want you to starve this winter. I'd hate to see that."

He watched as the swarm swirled around her head so fast it made her hair flick. She let out a giggle, not an annoying one like Pinkie's but something like a soft, delicate laugh, and smiled to the insects. "You're welcome. I think you're all sweet too."

Talking to bugs? A little weird...Then again, who was he to judge?

Suddenly, she started to sing a little tune to them. In comparison to Pinkie Pie again, this tune wasn't hyper or happy but rather relaxed and soothing.

Hello, Honey Bees, won't you play with me?

Hello, Honey Bees, won't you sing with me?

You don't have to hide or worry I will be your friend

Hello, Honey Bees, I'll play and sing with you all day

He leaned his head against the wooden wall of the cottage he was standing nearby. His ears perked and listening to the melody. For some reason, this song made something swell inside his chest.

He closed his eyes and started to drift off, getting lost in the notes Fluttershy was emanating.

Just when he was about to remain that way for a while, he shook himself out of the trance. He had no idea what had come over him in those few moments. He had just slept! Why was he feeling so relaxed?

"Excuse me!" He called, coming up behind her.

Fluttershy jumped ten feet in the air, squealing in surprise as she did so.

"Sorry!" Neublar quickly exclaimed, backing up a bit. "Didn't mean to scare you!"

Fluttershy, realizing it was only him, slowly hovered back down to earth. "Oh, it's okay..." She told him, blushing slightly. What made it embarrassing was that he must have heard her humming to the bees. "Did...did you hear any of that?"

Neublar nodded. "It was very pretty." He told her sincerely. "You could match a mermaid with your voice."

Fluttershy blushed even harder at his compliment, using her hooves to cover her lower face, including the small smile she now had. "T-T-Thank you..." She squeaked sincerely; she then lifted her head back up to meet his gaze. "You caught me in the middle of feeding the bees. You see, you have to be extra kind to them else their honey won't be as sweet. It's a trick I was taught by Granny Smith down at Apple Acres. At that time of year, I sell honey after Applejack and her family is done selling their Apple Cider. It's my own little hobby, and the bees and I really enjoy it. Every other pony also seems to like it too."

Neublar nodded. "I can tell. I like honey myself, though there isn't many places in Prehistoria you can find it without getting attacked by bees bigger than I am."

"Oh dear..." Fluttershy murmured, trying to imagine a bee the size of an amphibiod; the stinger alone had to be more than a foot long...

"So, what's the work plan for today?" He asked eagerly.

Fluttershy blinked in surprise, being snapped out of her thoughts. "Well, today I'm suppose to help bring a family of ducks down to the lake, but I'll have to lead them through town to do so." She told him. "You can help if you want."

Neublar nodded with a smile. "Let's get to work then." He told her.

After setting the basket of flowers near the beehive, Fluttershy and Neublar went to the small pond in Fluttershy's backyard, where a family of ducks were paddling and quacking about...

PonyVille Market, outside SugarCube Corner:

It wasn't very hard for Spyro to find Pinkie Pie; she was sitting at one of the tables outside SugarCube Corner, sucking away glumly on a milkshake. When she saw the dragon in kirin form approach, she smiled softly at him before going back to being gloomy again.

"Hey, Pinks." Spyro said as he sat down across the table from her. "Still feeling sad about Rainbow and Gilda?"

"Yeah..." Pinkie Pie muttered glumly. "...Spyro? Do you think Twilight was right? That I'm the one just being a big-jealous-judgemental-jealous-jealously-pants?"

Spyro gave it a moment to think about. "Well, maybe just a little." He admitted, causing her to sigh. "But I think that this Gilda could've given you a more polite approach as well." He continued. "You know, Pinkie. Maybe Gilda was being mean because she wanted some time to be alone with Rainbow so they could catch up; Like you said, their both old friends with each other and probably haven't seen each other for a long time. Don't you think it would be fair that they had that time alone to just be with each other and catch up? And then you can try tomorrow after they've gotten back together. Maybe Gilda will be friendlier then."

Pinkie Pie thought about it for a while. "Yeah, maybe you're right." She told him. "I can wait later if it'll give Dashie a chance to stay with her friend."

"Good girl." Spyro told her.

The sound of rushing air above them, along with the sound of laughter, drew their attention upwards, where Spyro and Pinkie Pie saw Rainbow Dash pass overhead with a female brown-and-white griffin which Spyro assumed was Gilda. Pinkie Pie quickly ducked down behind the table, pulling Spyro down with her, where they watched the duo in hiding.

"I've gotta take care of a few weather jobs around here. Shouldn't take long." Rainbow Dash told Gilda as they landed near the center of the market near SugarCube Corner. "Just, uh, hang out in town and I'll come find ya."

"That's cool, I guess." Gilda said in response, with a voice similar to Dash's, but a deeper, more punk-like attitude to it. "I'm gonna go chow down!"

"Later!" Rainbow Dash called as she took off, disappearing into the cloud cover.

Spyro took the moment to study the griffin before him. She was small compared to adult griffins, probably just a teenager like himself and the six girls; she was about twice the height and mass of the average pony, and three times the lengths thanks to the tail. Her fur and wings were brown, with a dark brown tuff at the end of her lion's tail, while her head, neck, and chest were covered in white feathers, like a bald eagle. She had lavender-grey, almost flame-shaped markings around her golden, eagle-like eyes, as well as a long bunch of lavender-tipped feathers growing out from her forehead in a rebellious hair style. Her beak was sharp and curved like most eagle beaks, while her black talons looked capable of tearing through wood, both her beak and eagle legs being yellow in color.

Spyro and Pinkie Pie watched as Gilda smirked deviously when she spotted Granny Smith slowly creaking toward the stand with vegetables. Using her cat-like stealth, the griffin slid behind the stand and used her tail to spook the eldery mare.

"AHH! A RATTLER! A RATTLER! RUN FOR THE HILLS! EVERYPONY RUN, SAVE THEMSELVES!" Granny Smith cried, jumping into the air and spinning her legs in that classic 'rev-up' fashion before touching down and taking off down the street at the speed of a tree gaining growth rings. Little need to say, it was hilarious.

"Ah, poor Granny Smith! She didn't know it was a joke! How mean!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed as she watched the mare continue to inch away...only to see Spyro snickering behind his claw. "SPYRO!"

"What?! It's not the prank that's funny; it's Granny Smith's reaction!" Spyro told her. "Besides, I can't judge her pulling that prank, 'cause it's the type of prank I would pull..." He then frowned. "Besides, I don't think you or Rainbow are the ones to judge someone pulling pranks!" He scolded.

Pinkie Pie blushed heavily. "Yeah, you're right. I can't misjudge her; it was sort of a funny prank...I guess." She admitted.

Gilda then walked through the town, pausing suddenly next to the fruit stand; Spyro's smile faded once he saw her use her tail to grab an apple when nopony was watching and stuff it into her mouth.

Now that was different. That was *stealing*. Maybe Pinkie Pie was right after all...

Pinkie Pie gasped. "I *did* misjudge her! She's not only a meanie-mean-pants, she's also a thief!" She exclaimed...before softening. "Nononono! She might give it back! It's just a joke."

Spyro was about to object when Fluttershy suddenly came by, walking backwards as she led a family of ducks down the street. That was odd; wasn't Neublar usually with her? "Alright little ones, this way, this way." Fluttershy softly spoke to the ducks. "Mama duck, you're free and clear." However, since she was walking backwards to watch the ducks, she wasn't watching where she was going and ran straight into Gilda.

"HEY!" Gilda exclaimed.

"Oh, please, excuse me." Fluttershy politely asked.

"I'M WALKIN' HERE!" Gilda snapped angrily, spreading her wings to make herself more intimidating.

Spyro growled, bursting into purple flame; enough was enough.

"Oh, um, I'm sorry. I-I-I was just trying to.-" Fluttershy murmured in terror, slowly backing away.

"*I'm sorry, I'm sorry*." Gilda mocked in a fake tone. "Why don't you just watch where you're going, doofus!" She snarled as she stalked closer to Fluttershy, like a predator closing in on prey.

"NO!" Spyro roared, now a dragon again, leaping into the air and landing between Fluttershy and Gilda, facing the latter angrily. He was bigger than Gilda, true, but what griffins lacked in size and strength, they made up for in speed, agility, and accuracy. "*You* watch where *you're* going!"

Gilda was surprised by the sudden intervention of a dragon of all creatures, but quickly re-assumed her anger. "Mind your own business, freak! This has got nothing to do with you!" She spat at him.

Spyro, however, stood his ground. "By picking on my friends, you've made it my business!" He snarled back. "You were watching where you were going! It was your own fault you bumped into Fluttershy!"

Gilda blinked, as if remembering something. "So *you're* that purple punk RD told me about!" She said sinisterly, she and Spyro already circling each other like cats, just waiting for the time to strike; Fluttershy was frozen on the spot, watching the two creatures in horror. "It'll be fun to teach you a thing or two!"

"Bring it!" Spyro snarled, spreading his wings for battle.

Gilda leapt for Spyro with beak open and claws bared, sending out a shrieking roar that seemed to make the nearby buildings tremble. Spyro met the attack with his own claws and rolled away, tossing the griffin off him. Again Gilda dove for Spyro's neck, her tail lashing the air dangerously. Spyro roared and rolled out of the way, smashing his tail into the side of her head. Gilda rolled painfully onto his side but leapt back up seconds later and commenced another attack.

Spyro roared in pain as the griffin caught him a nasty gash across his thigh, but retaliated by sinking his teeth into the back of his adversary's neck. Gilda shrieked angrily, pained, as she attempted to shake Spyro off. But the purple dragon hung on savagely, fueled by the animalistic taste of blood in his mouth. Suddenly a sharp pain in his back caused him to release the eagle/lion hybrid and stumble away. Gilda wrenched away from the purple dragon, swishing her tail, scratching her blood-coated hind paw against the ground. Spyro snarled and dug his claws into the earth, his eyes filling with the echo of fire. A growl grew deep within his throat and seconds later he opened his mouth to send forth a gushing torrent of scorching flame, which Gilda leapt over thanks of her wings.

"Who do you think you are?!" Spyro snarled angrily as he cut off his fire, his eyes burning with rage.

"I should be asking you that!" Gilda snarled, diving at Spyro once more.

Spyro stood his ground, lowering himself to the ground and tensing his legs, digging his feet into the earth. Seconds before the griffin landed on top of him, Spyro propelled himself upwards and forward as the same time, catching his adversary in the chest with a full-forced head butt. Gilda was thrown backwards and landed sprawled on the ground a few metres away. Spyro landed on all fours again, panting and glaring at his opponent as though daring her to get up.

Gilda gave several pained gasps and raised her head, wincing as her chest ached painfully. She gave Spyro the filthiest look she could muster.

"Damn you..." She snarled as she finally pushed herself up. She suddenly forward and slashed angrily at Spyro, causing the purple dragon to leap backwards to avoid her claws. Painfully the griffin's claws glanced across the scales of his chest and legs again and again. Spyro stumbled back as his opponent's tail struck him painfully across the cheek, knocking him to the ground. Gilda pounced onto him, slashing and pecking him with such speed and ferocity that Spyro didn't get a chance to strike back.

But Spyro wasn't about to go down that easily. The moment Gilda paused, Spyro's throat began to fill with cold air. Seconds before she struck again, he opened his mouth to release a thick stream of ice from his maw. The stream Spyro's breath immediately struck Gilda in the face, dousing it in freezing cold liquid.

"What?" Gilda yelped, stumbling backwards and pawing furiously at her freezing eyes.

A new roar erupted amongst the battle as Neublar came barreling down the street and slammed into Gilda full force, using his massive arms to throw her off of Spyro. The griffin shrieked in pain and surprise as she was sent spinning through the air, crashing away into the nearby stand of fruit. The ponies there fled from the scene as the stand exploded in a shower of smashed vegetables and large splinters.

"You will not harm my friends!" Neublar bellowed in rage, standing up on his hind legs to pound his chest with his fists before slamming them back down on the ground, causing cracks to form in the earth.

"Thanks..." Spyro said half-heartedly as weakly he got up, wiping blood from his lip with his wrist.

Gilda groaned as she pulled herself out of the wreckage; she wasn't as badly beaten as Spyro was, but she had her fair share of injuries. A three-claw slash adorned her chest, along with a large gash on the side of her head and particles on ice decorating her face. She was also bleeding from the back of her neck, and she held her sprained left foreclaw to her chest. Her eyes burned with hate, but she kept herself from leaping at the dragon...not with the fact he breathed more than fire and with this new, powerful-looking frog-ape creature protecting him.

"This isn't over, freak..." She snarled darkly at Spyro before she spread her wings and took off, screeching an eagle's cry as she went.

Neublar snorted in satisfaction, still glaring after the eagle, before he turned back to Spyro. "You okay?" He asked in concern.

"Do I look okay?" Spyro asked sarcastically, almost collapsing to the earth. Neublar quickly caught him before he hit the ground, gently setting him down slowly.

The dragon was certainly not the pinnacle of health at the moment. His worst wound was the massive gash on the left thigh, along with many smaller slashes and bruises decorating his entire body, most around the chest and neck area. He had a three-claw slash mark across his right side of his snout, and all of his wounds were bleeding.

Suddenly Fluttershy came over and landed next to Spyro, weeping bitterly as she hugged his face; it hurt, but Spyro ignored the pain. "I-I-I'm so sorry, Spyro!" She wailed, her face stained with tear marks. "You g-got hurt standing u-up for m-me! T-This is a-all my f-fault!"

"No, it wasn't, Fluttershy." Spyro assured her, pulling his head out of her arms. "I wasn't going to let her harm you like she did me."

"W-What do I do?!" Fluttershy asked, still crying. "D-Do you need anything?"

Spyro turned to Neublar. "There are rubies in the jewelry store down the street there." He told the frog ape. "Bring back as many as you can."

"Sure thing." Neublar stated. "Fluttershy, stay with him." He told the pegasus before bounding off down the street again.

"O-Okay." Fluttershy said in confusion; she didn't know what Spyro needed gems for, but she trusted his decision. She nestled herself down next to Spyro head, using the tip of her mane to wipe away from the blood from his mouth and face; she was still sniffing in fear and sorrow.

"Why wasn't Neublar with you?" Spyro then asked. "If he was here, we wouldn't be in this mess."

"Oh, please don't blame him." Fluttershy begged. "He had gone back to my house to retrieve the bag of duck feed I had forgotten. He wouldn't have been missing if it wasn't for me."

"Ah."

"Spyro! Spyro! Spyro!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed as she rushed up to him and Fluttershy. "I saw the whole thing from over at the cafe!"

Spyro coughed, spitting out droplets of blood in the process. "Well, Pinkie, I guess I owe you an apology; you were right about Gilda all along."

Pinkie Pie looked angry in response. "She's a grump, a thief, and a bully! The meanest kind of meanie-mean-pants there is!" She nearly shouted. "I can take it, but *no one* attacks my friends like that! *NO*! *ONE*! This calls for *extreme* measures! Pinkie Pie Style!"

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "What are you planning to do?"

"I'm gonna...throw her a party!"

Fluttershy and Spyro could only stare at her as if she was crazy...which she probably was. "You're kidding, right?" The latter asked incredously.

"Nope!" Pinkie Pie said cheerfully. "A party will be just what the doctor ordered!"

"I think you'd better rethink your Health Plan, then." Neublar stated as he returned, his large ape arms full of red and green gems. "I also brought back some green ones to help get your strength back."

"Always goin' that next mile, huh?" Spyro joked half-heartedly.

Neublar shrugged playfully before he simply dumped the armload of precious stones on top of the dragon. Fluttershy squeaked at his actions. "Neublar! Careful! You may hurt him even more!" She said softly yet worringly.

Neublar shook his head with a brotherly smile. "Just wait for it."

The two mares looked confused for a second, but stepped back as Spyro wrapped his arm around the pile of gems near his chest, holding them close as he closed his eyes in concentration. Then, much to Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie's amazement, the gems began to glow with red and green light, turning into a sparkling energy of the same color; the magical sparkles were then magically absorbed into the dragon's body, targeting the wounds...which, to the mares' even greater awe, began to slowly heal and seal back up.

"Ooh, shiny!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed.

Soon all the gems were absorbed into his body, the wounds all healing up, even the gash on his thigh. His strength regained, Spyro pushed himself up onto his feet with some efforts, still feeling the effects that the battle put into him.

"That...that was amazing..." Fluttershy whispered breathlessly.

"That was super-duper, extra shiny-sparkly amazing!" Pinkie Pie said cheerfully.

Neublar smiled wisely, arms folded. "I see dragons do that all the time, but no matter how many times I've seen them draw strength from those Spirit Crystals, it nevers ceases to amaze me."

Spyro merely grinned in response.

SugarCube Corner, an hour later:

"This has got to be the stupidest idea she has ever come up with." Spyro stated, his mood once again tense and sour.

The main room of SugarCube Corner was now decorated with party decorations for Pinkie Pie's party for Gilda, such as balloons, streamers, confetti, and other such things, along with tables of treats like cupcakes, cookies, cakes, pies, and other party snacks. Spyro, Neublar, and Fluttershy were currently helping to put up the last of the decorations as Pinkie Pie stood at the door, welcoming all the ponies arriving to 'Welcome to PonyVille' party for the female griffin.

"I know Pinkie's heart is in the right place, but I don't think throwing a party is the wisest idea to handle the situation with." Neublar stated as he helped a timid Fluttershy hang up the 'Welcome' banner over the main counter.

"Who's this 'Gilda' I've heard nothin' about?" Spyro heared Applejack ask Rarity.

"I hear that she's an old friend of Rainbow Dash; a griffin! So rare..." Rarity told Applejack as they moved away from the dragon and amphibiod.

"Welcome! Welcome!" Pinkie Pie told the next group of ponies to enter, just as Spyro came up behind her.

"Hey, Pinkie?" He asked, earning her attention. "Look, I know you mean well, but I think you're making a mistake with this party." He told her. "Are you sure it'll-"

"Don't worry your scaly little head about mean old Gilda." Pinkie Pie told him, patting Spyro's head in a fond manner...despite the five-foot height distance; how'd she pull *that* one off? "Your auntie Pinkie Pie's got it all taken care of!" She then bounced away merrily.

"I'm more than 200 years older than you." Spyro stated, turning away. "But, okay..." He began to return to where Twilight and Neublar were standing, but came face to face with an angry Rainbow Dash; the cyan pegasus looked ready to murder him.

"Why are you doing this?" She asked in a dark tone, hovering in front of his face.

"Doing what?" Spyro asked with caution.

"Throwing this party." She said in a serious tone, keeping that glare of calm fury. "Gilda told me what happened at the market."

"She did?" Spyro asked, surprised that Gilda would talk about bullying Fluttershy to Rainbow Dash so openly.

"Yeah, she did. She told me all about how you attacked her in the market for *no reason*!" The pegasus snarled, her voice rising the more she spoke. "And don't tell me you didn't because she has the claw marks to prove it!"

"*Excuse* me?!" Spyro exclaimed angrily. "I think she left out a few important details!"

"I don't wanna hear it!" Rainbow Dash shouted, glaring him down and causing him to back away a few steps; by now everyone in the room was watching them in tense silence. "Ever since we've met you on that Celestia-damned mountain you've caused nothing but trouble for this entire town! You've treated everypony like garbage, you've let your monster freaks roam free, and now you're *attacking my friends*! I don't know what it was that you were planning with this party, but I don't want you here!"

"Are you even going to listen to *my* side of the story?" Spyro growled back.

"I know all that I need to know!" Rainbow Dash yelled. "I don't care who Princess Celestia thinks you are! You're a hateful, black-hearted monster who cares only about himself, and will *never* be welcomed in Equestria!" She then lowered her voice. "Get out."

"Listen-" Spyro began.

"*GET! **OUT!***"

POW!

Spyro cried in pain as Rainbow Dash whirled around and slammed her hind hooves into his face, kicking him backwards into one of the tables with a crash. Everyone was struck silent, no one daring to say or do anything as Spyro struggled to his feet, pushing himself out of the wreckage; blood trickled down the side of his chin from his mouth, and he was favoring his right arm.

"Fine." He spat bitterly, head hanging low as he limped out the door, past a smirking Gilda.

"Wait..." Fluttershy began softly, but stopped when Neublar placed his hand on her shoulder, quietly shaking his head 'no'. Fluttershy looked torn, knowing this was unfair, but she submitted to the frog-ape.

Pinkie Pie was the first to recover. "Well, this is a party, is it not?" She asked cheerfully, lighting up the rather dark mood of the room. "Gilda, I'm so honored to throw you one of my signature Pinkie Pie parties, and I really, truly, sincerely, hope you feel welcome here amongst all us pony folk." She then held out her hoof for a handshake. Gilda hesitated for a moment, but she slowly reached out to shake it; once her claw came into contact with Pinkie Pie's hoof, she received quite the mind-zapping shock, causing her to collapse to the ground. Pinkie Pie laughed and so did every pony else.

Even Rainbow Dash managed to laugh, now in higher spirits that Spyro was now gone. "Oh Pinkie Pie, the old hoof-shake buzzer. You are a *scream*!"

"Yeah..." Gilda chuckled half-heartedly. "Uh, good one, Pinkie Pie..."

"Come on G, I'll introduce you to some of my other friends." Rainbow Dash stated, trotting toward the others.

"Right behind you Dash." She replied, however, she told Pinkie Pie something that Neublar heard, but couldn't make out. Nonetheless, Pinkie Pie giggled at each comment she made.

"Everyone, I'd like you all to meet Gilda, a long-time, dear friend of Rainbow Dash. Let's honor her and welcome her to Ponyville." Pinkie Pie announced, even hugging Gilda. Gilda looked upset at Pinkie Pie at first, but once all the ponies cheered for her, she actually gave an honest smile, accepting a friendly half-hug from Rainbow Dash.

"Please help yourself!" Pinkie Pie offered.

Gilda walked over to some candy on the table. "Vanilla lemon drops. Don't mind if I do." She said, taking one in her beak beginning to chew. After a few moments, she made a sour face and released a roar of fire. "HOT!" She cried out. Pinkie Pie even roasted a marshmallow with the flames.

"G, the punch!" Rainbow Dash yelled over to Gilda, though she was grinning. Gilda raced over to the punch bowl. However, she had an unexpected surprise with the glass.

"Well, whaddya know, pepper in the vanilla lemon drops, and the punch served in a dribble glass!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed.

"Ha! Priceless! *Priceless*!" Rainbow Dash laughed.

Gilda raced over to another drink that was prank free. She chugged the drink and gulped. "Yeah, HILARIOUS." She said, sarcastically.

"Hey G, look! Presents!" Rainbow Dash pointed to several boxes of presents lying on the table. Gilda immediately zipped over to the presents, excited. She began opening a cylinder one, but several fake snakes shot out of the can and surprised her, causing her fur and feather to puff out in surprise, making her look like a giant puffball and causing several ponies to laugh.

"Spittin' snakes..." Neublar heard Applejack laugh. "Somepony pulled that prank on me last month."

"Ha ha. I bet I know who THAT was." Gilda responded with obvious sarcasm in her laughter again.

"You *do*?" Pinkie Pie asked.

Neublar didn't understand; was Pinkie Pie pulling all those pranks?

Once outside, Spyro let loose the angry growl that had been building up inside him, gritting his teeth and squeezing back tears in anger. He knew that Rainbow Dash had been deceived by Gilda, but that didn't stop him from seething in anger; he couldn't help himself...her words had stabbed deeper than she would ever know.

Blood continue to leak from his mouth, but he out-right ignored it as he continued on a short distance away from town, coming to a hill overlooking the Everfree forest. He decided that this was as good a place as any to wait for this plan of Pinkie Pie's to come through, whatever it was.

He laid himself down in the cool grass, resting his head down on the soft earth and merely laid there, brooding in his darker emotions...until his eyes slowly closed in sleep...

"Cake time everypony!" Pinkie Pie announced later in the party, pushing out a large cake with multiple candles on top.

"Hey, can I blow out the candles?" Spike excitedly asked.

"Why don't we let Gilda blow out the candles, Spike. She *is* the guest of honor after all." Twilight told Spike

Suddenly, Gilda zipped over and shoved Spike out of the way. "*Exactly*!" She snapped. Neublar frowned at the griffin; he was about to go up to her, but Fluttershy placed her hoof on his shoulder this time. Gilda took a deep breath and blew out the candles. Yet, flames appeared on the candles again. Gilda noticed this and tried to blow out the candles another time, but they turned on anyway. Every pony began laughing. Gilda continued to try blowing out the candles but she failed every time.

"Re-lighting birthday candles, I *love* that prank! What a classic." Spike chuckled.

"Now, I wonder who could've done that!" Pinkie Pie stated.

"Yeah, I *wonder*..." Gilda replied darkly.

Spike literally began digging through the cake. "Mmm, who cares? This cake is *amazing*!" He said as he came out on top.

"Spike!" Twilight scolded.

"What? It was great, try some."

Neublar, however, could see that Gilda was getting annoyed and angry, but hid her emotions when Rainbow Dash approached her.

"Hey G, you're not upset about some silly candles, are you?" Rainbow Dash asked.

"No way Dash, like I said, I'm down with a good prank." Gilda replied, trying to keep her cool...

"Come on then, let's have some cake." Rainbow Dash ran over to the cake.

After a moment, Applejack announced another event. "Hey y'all, it's pin the tail on the pony. Let's play!" She said, standing near the tail of said game.

"Oh, my favorite game. Can I go first? Can I have the purple tail?" Rarity asked.

"Well, I am the guest of honor; I'll have the purple tail." Gilda snapped, quickly retrieving the tail. Neublar glared at her; he started realizing that the whole time at the party, she was acting like a child...maybe even worse than a child.

"Yeah, Gilda should definitely go first. Let's get you blindfolded!" Pinkie Pie encouraged.

"Hey what-ugh-" Spike quickly blindfolded Gilda. "What are you doing? Rrrah!"

Pinkie Pie spun Gilda around.

"We're spinning you around and around and then you pin the tail on the pony. Now just walk straight ahead and pin the tail." Pinkie Pie directed.

"*Now just walk straight ahead and pin the tail*." Gilda snapped in a mocking tone. "Heh, yeah, right. This is another prank, isn't it? I'm going *this* way." She turned around the exact opposite way the poster was at.

"Wait. The poster is this-" Pinkie Pie tried to warn.

Gilda, finally getting her just desserts, slipped on cake icing while she was walking, causing her to slide all the way into the kitchen with a crash; when the flour settled, it revealed Gilda

standing there, covered in icing and with the tail of the pony game hanging over her beak like a mustache.

"Uh, Gilda? You pinned the tail on the wrong end." Pinkie Pie pointed out.

All the ponies laughed, causing her to finally burst into flames, figuratively. She roared in anger, leaping into the air with her wings. "*This* is your idea of a good time! I've never met a lamer bunch of dweebs in all my life! And Pinkie Pie...you!" She snarled, pointing an angry claw at the pink pony. "You are Queen Lame-o with your weak little party pranks! Did you really think you can make me lose my cool?!" She asked, unaware she he done just that. "Well, Dash and I have ten times as much cool as the rest of you put together! Come on Dash, we're bailing on this pathetic scene!" Rainbow Dash didn't move though. Instead she had an angry expression on her face. "*Come on*, Rainbow Dash. *I said*, we're *leaving*!"

"You know Gilda..." Rainbow Dash began. "*I* was the one who set up all those weak pranks at this party."

"WHAT?!" Gilda gasped.

"Ooh." Pinkie Pie said.

"So I guess *I'm* Queen Lame-o." Rainbow Dash continued with a sharp frown.

"*Ouch*." Neublar muttered to himself.

"Come on, Dash, you're joshing me." Gilda responded, laughing weakly.

"They weren't all meant for you specifically!" Rainbow Dash explained, trying to calm her down. "It was just dumb luck that you set them all off."

"I shoulda known, that dribble cup had Rainbow Dash written all over it." Pinkie Pie told Spike, startling the baby dragon.

"No way. I-It was Pinkie Pie!" Gilda insisted, still acting like a stubborn child: trying to act 'cool'. "She set up this party to trip me up, to make a fool of me!"

"Me? I threw this party to improve your attitude. I thought a good party might turn that frown upside down." Pinkie Pie replied. Neublar blinked; was that Pinkie Pie's plan all along. To give her a party to appeal to her better nature?

"And you sure didn't need any help making a fool of yourself!" Rainbow Dash told Gilda, standing up to her for her friends. "You know, this is *not* how I thought my *old* friend would treat my *new* friends! If being cool is all you care about, maybe you should go find some new *cool* friends someplace else."

Gilda growled under her breath. "Yeah?" She snapped, spreading her wings. "Well you, you...you are such a...a flip-flop! Cool one minute and lame the next! When you decide not to be lame anymore, gimme a call!" She said, turning around and storming out the door.

"*Not* cool." Rainbow said, watching Gilda leave.

"Wow..." Spike said, "Talk about a party pooper..." Every pony began talking about how awkward the scene was.

"I'm sorry everypony, for bringing Gilda here." Rainbow said apologetically. "I didn't know how rude she was...and Pinkie Pie, I'm really sorry she ruined this awesome party you put on for her."

"Hey, if you want to hang out with party poopers, that's your business." Pinkie Pie cheerfully replied.

"I'd rather hang out with you. No hard feelings?"

"No hard feelings."

Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash both shocked each other when they shook hooves. They both revealed that they each had the shocker button on their hooves. Everypony began laughing. Twilight walked up to Pinkie Pie.

"Hey, Pinkie, sorry I accused you of misjudging Gilda. Looks likes I'm the one who misjudged you." Twilight apologized as well.

"It's okay Twilight, even you can't be a super smart smarty smart-pants all the time." Pinkie Pie accepted her apology, before turning to Rainbow Dash. "Besides, I already knew that Gilda was a big mean-meanie-pants."

Rainbow Dash looked surprised. "You did? How?" She asked.

"Well...I saw what happened between her and Spyro at the market." Pinkie explained, her cheerful demeanor becoming serious. "She was being really mean to Fluttershy! And Spyro was only protecting her, not being mean to Gilda!"

"It's true." Fluttershy said softly. "I accidently bumped into her, and when she started yelling at me; Spyro came in to protect me from her."

"And it was Gilda who threw the first slash to begin with." Neublar finished. "She could've killed him if I hadn't stopped her. Just be glad the gems in this world work the same as the crystals in his world, otherwise he would be in PonyVille's Hospital right about now."

Taking all of this in, Rainbow Dash realized she had made a terrible mistake...and quickly flew out the door.

Spyro looked up from his resting position on the hill to see Gilda flying overhead, heading straight for the distant mountains. He guessed Pinkie Pie's party didn't go as well as the pink pony was hoping...or did it? He couldn't tell. He was awoken from his nap about ten minutes ago by the roar of frustration Gilda made when she finally blew her top, and guessed that now she was leaving PonyVille out of the same frustration she was experiencing. At least he now had the satisfaction of seeing the griffin out of his friends' town.

Despite thinking good riddance, he couldn't help but feel a pinch of *pity* for the griffin and her former pegasus friend. Yes, she was a jerk, but she was also Rainbow Dash's old friend, and he knew that, despite the anger brewing on the surface, that broken friendships could lead to broken hearts. He just hoped Rainbow Dash wouldn't suffer much under the sadness of losing an old friend...

...then again, she would also be upset as well. And he would be the target of her anger, being the one that was part of the fight that started all this.

"Spyro?"

The voice was so soft, timid, and uncertain that Spyro didn't recognize it at first, but he lifted his head off the ground to see Rainbow Dash herself standing next to him. Her eyes were shimmering with unshed tears, as if she was trying to hold them back...and the fur of her cheeks were now wet and matted down.

The purple dragon groaned, expecting another rant attack. "Look, I-"

The next moment Spyro found his head wrapped tightly in the arms of a pegasus, who couldn't hold it back anymore and burst into tears once more. "I'm sorry! I'm so sorry! Please don't hate me for centuries, *please*!" She begged.

Seeing Rainbow Dash, the toughest and fiercest mare in all of PonyVille, break down into a sobbing, begging wreck was so shocking that Spyro couldn't find his voice to respond at first. But as the mares pleas became more sorrowful, he knew he had to say something. "Calm down, Rainbow." He told her softly, gently hugging and stroking the back of her head with his hands; she slowly began to stop, still sobbing softly as he hung to him. "Calm down...it's okay...calm down..."

Rainbow Dash wiped her eyes with her hoof, the fur of her cheeks matted with tears. "I-I'm so sorry, Spyro. For what I said earlier." She hiccuped as she still held onto him, now looking ashamed of herself. "I-I-I should've listened to you."

"It's okay, Rainbow Dash." Spyro told her. "You couldn't have known the truth."

But the pegasus was not finished or convinced. "I-I-It's not just that, but for everything! I-I've been mean to you ever since we met back on that mountain! And in Canterlot, then with landing

on your face, and finally when you were just trying to help your friend..." The tears began to run down her face again. "...a-and all just b-because I-I-I was *jealous*; everypony was paying so much attention to you instead of me anymore. That's why I was so mean...Pinkie Pie was right."

So that's what it was. Jealousy.

"B-But you weren't trying to hurt anypony! Y-You were just trying to be a good friend, even though you're a dragon! I-I-I'm sorry I-I c-called you all those horrible things! Y-You are welcomed here in Equestria, I-"

"Stop." Spyro told her sternly but gently as he pulled her off his face. "I'm not angry at you, Rainbow."

Rainbow Dash couldn't believe what she had just heard. "Y-Y-You're not?" She asked hopefully.

"I don't blame you for what happened at Dragon Mountain, in Canterlot, or with Savagera." He told her as he set her back down on the earth in front of him. "You're friends and home were threatened, even if they weren't intentional, and you did what any decent person in your position would've done. For landing on my face...well, that would be Applejack's fault, not yours. And for what happened in SugarCube Corner, you were not to blame. Gilda was. She was who lied to you, and it was her fault you didn't know the truth."

"B-But I could've listen to you..." Rainbow whispered, turning her face away in shame. "You don't really hate me?"

Spyro managed a small chuckle. "Come on. Only a complete self-centered jerk would not forgive something that wasn't your fault to begin with." He told her; she still didn't seem convinced. His gaze softened, using his claw to turn her face back in his direction. "Look. I know you feel bad, but you don't have too; I forgive you, and I'm willing to start afresh if you are."

For the first time since she had met him, Rainbow Dash gave him a small, but truly honest smile.

"Sure." She said softly, wiping away her tears.

Spyro nodded with a smile, giving her a brief yet warm hug, which she returned, before he rolled over and laid down on his back, watching the clouds above him turn to golden and orange colors as the sun began to set. Rainbow Dash joined him, laying across from him, staring up at the clouds with him.

"It must be nice being a purple dragon." She stated. "Having all that power of yours and always being in the center of attention. I wish I was like that." She told him.

For a long time, Spyro didn't answer; his face fell in heavy thought at her words. "No you don't." He told her.

Rainbow Dash looked surprise, looking upwards at the dragon. "What do you–?"

"You don't want to be like me." He muttered, his gaze cast downwards.

"What do you mean?" Rainbow Dash asked, sitting up to look at him properly. "It would be awesome to be like you! You have enough power to match up to Princess Celestia and you're always the center of attention! I'd love to be like that!"

"You might...but I don't.." Spyro muttered, sighing as he closed his lilac eyes. "Sometimes I...I wish I wasn't like this. When I was still human, all I ever dreamed about was becoming the best trainer there was and receiving all the fame and glory...but when I became that as a dragon, I see now how foolish I had been. Fame is not what it appears to be. Sure, the promises and what it looks like on the outside may be enticing, but all it really does is make everyone forget who you really are. No one saw me as myself anymore; only what they saw as a popularity image. Who I truly was faded into history...and when what I really was came to light, the image that I had become was shamed and disgraced as the monster I appeared to be. I was lost for good...and those I cared for become threatened as well."

Rainbow Dash was silent for a long time. "Wow..." She finally spoke; she then looked ashamed again. "I-I had no idea it was like that. I'm really sorry, Spyro; I thought that's all what you were trying to do."

Spyro snorted a half-hearted laugh. "I noticed." He told her. "Sometimes, there's a small part of me that still enjoys the attention...but I know now to ignore it, because I know it won't last forever." He then looked up to meet her gaze. "That's why I like staying with Twilight and you girls, as well as my family back home. You all want to be my friend for *who* I am, because *what* I am is something you all fear instead of admire."

Rainbow gave him a small smile. "That's cool of you, I guess." She admitted.

Spyro nodded before he turned his gaze back to the sky.

'Dear Princess Celestia

Today I learned that you should never judge someone by the way you feel about them, especially if those feelings are negative ones. It's easy to let jealousy and personal anger blind you from the truth, but it's also very foolish. If you let personal feelings get the better of you, it will only cause everypony more trouble than it's worth and turn you into something you don't want to be. Anyone, even dragons, can be good as ponies, and if you let personal anger and selfishness get in the way, you might miss out on making a really cool friend.

Yours Truly, Rainbow Dash.'

"Hey, Spyro?" Rainbow Dash asked after a while. "Can I ask a question?"

"Go ahead." Spyro stated.

The cyan pegasus paused a moment before asking. "What was your name when you were still human?" She asked carefully. "Was it still Spyro or was it something else?"

The purple dragon had not been expecting that. He flinched slightly at the question; it hadn't spoken his old name or assumed his old form for more than a hundred years...for it only meant for him bad memories and the disgrace of humanity.

Rainbow Dash noticed his reaction. "Oh, sorry." She quickly told him. "You don't have to answer it you don't want too. Sorry I brought it up."

"No, it's okay." He told her, softening once more. "I had a feeling you girls would ask it eventually."

"So...what was it?"

Spyro took a deep breath before answering.

"Ash Ketchum."

The harsh winds of the upper mountains whistled past Gilda's ears as she stormed through the sky, her wings flapping harder than usual out of frustration. She couldn't believe that Rainbow Dash had actually allowed herself to be dragged down to the level of all those lame ponies! What ever happened to being the coolest of the bunch like they were at Flight Camp?!

It must've been that pink pony's fault; that idiotic dweeb who just couldn't keep her stupid hooves on the ground like a normal earth pony. That must've been it! Rainbow Dash had been hanging around lame ponies for so long she became one herself.

No...that couldn't have been it. Because that purple dragon she met was just as hardcore and kept his cool just as much as she did...it must've been his fault! With him around being the cool one, who needed a pegasus as the attention of the town?

She growled at the thought of that purple freak; that fire-belching jerk of a reptile, beating her up and making her crumble in front of all those ponies, and making Rainbow Dash as much as a dweeb as the other ponies! Oh, she would make him *pay*!

'Just you wait, 'Spyro'!' She thought to herself as she flew alongside the cliff of the mountain she was near. *'You haven't heard the last of me!'*

Her dark thoughts were interrupted from an angered shriek/roar not her own. She braked to a halt at the sound, looking up at the cliff ledge just above her to see a strange, winged, featherless monster perched on the ledge, glaring down at her with angry reptilian eyes, having been disturbed from its meal.

It was well past twice her size, its folded arm-wings more than 30 feet in length each; the wings were webbed with leathery wing membrane like a bat's, but with one super-long finger per wing, a reptile hand of three fingers adoring the end of each arm to walk on all fours with. It's body was slightly humaniod, with saurian hind legs ending in grasping claws, and a short, lizard-like tail adorning its rear. It's long yet strong neck supported a large head with a long, straight, toothless beak, large, orange reptilian eyes with semi-slit pupils, and a long, slight-curved, blade-shaped crest growing the back of its head. It's flesh was a muddy orange-brown in color, with dark reddish-black markings covering it's back and spine, the wing membrane being a paler orange-brown.

Gilda was dumbfounded at the sight of this creature, but even she knew a stronger threat when she saw one. It glared down on her, as if daring her to make a move. Looking up even higher, Gilda spotted even more of these creatures, some flying about on enormous wings while others clung of the sides of the cliff; those nearby were also staring at her, as if a griffin was something they did not welcome.

"I think I'll take another way back home." She said nervously, turning around and quickly flying the other way.

The Pteranodon glared after her for a few more second before returning to the mutilated carcass of a male adult griffin it had slaughtered that very morning, stripping off large pieces with its sharp beak before swallowing it down.

And floating in the air above the cliff itself was the entry point of these prehistorian reptiles: a large, glowing portal resembling thousands of glass shards floating about a glowing white void...

(A/N: For those of you who don't know, I've posted up drawings of my Original Characters onto my account on Devianart. My profile name and avatar are the same, so look it up if you're curious about how my characters look like.)

9. Snakes on a Pegasus

CHAPTER VIII: SNAKES ON A PEGASUS

Cloudsdale, Weather Factory's Cloud Room:

Plushy.

That's how Venom would describe what he woke up on. Soft and Plushy, like a really comfortable mattress; it was very comfortable, and he was tempted to fall back asleep right then and there. But the fact he was asleep on this told him something was wrong.

He slept in a stone cave, not on a plushy mattress.

He opened his reptilian eyes and then lifted his viper-like head up to find himself in a strange white building, which looked like a factory of some sort. The walls and openings around him were also made from this white material, and carved and styled like roman architecture, the columns standing tall toward the sun above; the floors and walls were decorated with swirls and whisps. They were great purple bellows of some sort lined up along the floor, and above these floated small *clouds* that floated out into the sky above.

He was resting on top of one of the lower hanging clouds now, just about twenty feet from the floor.

*'What the f***?'* He thought to himself in shock, shifting his coils about to keep himself from slipping. No mass can stand or walk on clouds! That was basic knowledge, for crying out loud! Yet, here he was, resting on his own little Cloud Nine...or nine hundred, giving the count of all the clouds in the room.

'Where the hell am I?' He asked himself.

Suddenly the large doors to the factory began opening; Venom quickly slid his body down into the cloud he was lying. He poked his head out the bottom slightly to see the locals who flew i-

'No...' He groaned to himself, eyes wide with horror. *'Oh* No*!'*

Ponies. Pegasi from the look of their wings, all of which were wearing white work uniforms to keep themselves warm and also keep themselves and their working materials safe and clean. He, the most savage and feared predator of his home planet...was trapped in a world of pretty, pink, princess *ponies*! A nightmare to say the least.

'This can not *be happening!'* Venom stated flatly and mentally. *'A world this...*disgusting *actually exists!'* He turned even greener than he already was. *'Oui...here comes last night's dinner!'*

"Alright, everypony! Let's get to work!" A stockier, blue-furred pegasi stallion with a darker-blue mane announced, apparently the leader. "Those clouds aren't gonna make themselves!"

Venom nearly did lose his lunch at the sound of him saying 'every*pony*'; were they really *that* low? But not only did these equines (he refused to say pony) have the nerve to exist and 'cute-i-fy' existence, but they also went forth and pissed on the name of basic physics and reality! What world existed where the locals made their own weather and such?! Unacceptable! That kind of power was just asking for war with the land races...unless they all 'lived in perfect friendship and harmony', where everything was all sunshine, bunnies, flowers, rainbows

and...and...*PINK*! Oui, he really felt like throwing up right about now. Where was an X-Box when you needed one?!

But he kept his lunch down as he watched the pretty little ponies (GAG!) go to work, carrying large, metal containers of water to those bellows. They poured the water into the bellows' mouths; soon enough, an eruption of steam billowed forth, forming into a cloud above.

Well, at least *that* followed science: water evaporates into steam and forms clouds at high, cool elavations.

Suddenly it hit him. The clouds of this world looked to be made of the same material that the worlds and columns were made of...and why would winged creatures lived at ground level?

This whole place was made out of *clouds*, probably hundreds of feet above the earth!

'Ah, great! Not only am I in Princess Pony Pixie-land, I've arrived in Queen Cuddle-Hug-Kisses's Weather Factory. How typical!' The Emperor Cobra spat mentally. Suddenly devious ideas entered his mind. *'Then again...this could be a* lot *of fun...'* He thought with a grin, his tongue flicking out in anticipation.

One pegasus mare with green fur and a pink-magenta mane/tail flew up to the cloud he was hiding in; the moment she grabbed the sides of the fluff, she came face to face with a pair of alarmingly reptilian eyes.

But she didn't have time to scream before those eyes began to glow with a strange, poisonous-green light, the slit pupils glowing yellow and spinning around in the eyes to forming a spinning galaxy of yellow and green. Soon the terrified mare went stiff and silent as her own irises began to glow green and pupils glow yellow.

"That's right..." Venom hissed in a cunning, smug tone, the glow of his eyes fading. "Not on *my* watch..."

"What's going on over there?" The blue stallion from before asked in an agitated tone. "We don't have time to stand around! Get back to work before-!"

"Before *what*, tubby?" Venom asked with a grinning snarl as he stuck his head of the cloud, towering over the ponies as his eyes began glowing and swirling once. All the ponies in the room gasped in horror at the sight of the monstrous snake before them...but all went still as their eyes began glowing with the same lights, falling under the serpent's hypnotic gaze.

Venom snorted in satisfaction, slithering out of his hiding place and onto the cool, smooth floor.

"Good ponies." He snarled with satisfaction; he then lowered his head to the floor, slithering through the living pegasi statues and out the door. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a world to terrify."

PonyVille Library:

"Ash Ketchum, huh?" Twilight asked as she continued reading Encyclopedia of Prehistorian Monsters. "Was that a common human name?"

Spyro chuckled at the older memories. "No, not really." He admitted; the purple kirin was laying on the floor, playing chess with Spike. "It was a name my mortal mother had given me before I became a dragon; after that, my name became Spyro, as I had been named by my true parents as an egg."

Twilight looked curious. "Huh...how did they know you going to be a boy?" She asked.

"They didn't." Spyro told her. "Dragons give their eggs each two names, one for each gender; when the baby, or wyrmling, hatches and the parents finally discover what sex he or she is, then they keep the name for the one sex and stop using the other." He grinned as he made his move. "Checkmate."

Spike paled, his lone king surround on all sides, before groaning and slamming his face into the board in defeat.

Twilight giggled, going back to her reading; she was currently in the Leviathan Class, reading details on the species group called Ophionaga, a class of saurian-serpent predators that live all over Prehistoria. "Just out of curiosity, what is it like being a human, anyway?" She asked, carefully though, just in case. "I mean, how did it feel and such?"

Spyro paused, taking a moment to look back on ancient memories of times long past. "Well, it was *very weird*." He admitted. "It felt normal at the time, but, looking back, I'm surprised I actually managed to live through it all without killing myself, considering how I used to throw myself into danger all the time."

"A dragon's mind in a human's body." Twilight thought out aloud. "Yeah, that does sound like a recipe for self-disaster."

The purple dragon laughed. "It certainly was; it didn't help at all that my dragon mind was also confined and limited to a human's brain either." He told her. "As a human, all of my dragon thoughts, senses, and instincts were dormant, which included my sense of direction, memory and intelligence space, reactions to certain situations, fighting skills, and even sexual attraction and instincts. The result was a cluless, slightly dumb twelve-year-old boy who could get lost in a one-room house, threw himself into danger without thinking, and was *completely clueless* about romance. Man, you should've seen me when I first turned back, when all those confined thoughts and instincts were suddenly blown back into me full-force...especially with romance."

Twilight looked interested. "Uhm...do dragons actually have attraction for females of other species, thanks to their...'advanced reproduction system'?" She asked, blushing slightly when she remembered she was on that certain list.

"I don't know how the overall species feel." He admitted, thinking about it. "I guess it all depends on personal tastes. I know Spike does, thanks to his crush on Rarity. Me? Well, I guess being human to start with is why I think some females of certain humanoid species are attractive, such as Melody and other mermaids."

"What about ponies? Are you attracted to mares?"

"Are you asking this out of scientific research and curiosity, or are you actually trying to suggest something?" Spyro asked warily, eyeing her oddly.

Spike laughed hard at the blush on Twilight's face, which had erupted into a full-blown crimson. "N-N-No! I-I not trying to-! I-I mean, I don't want...I mean, I-!" The unicorn stammered.

"I kidding, Twilight." Spyro assured her with an amused smirk, raising his hand to calm her down. He then thought about her question. "Well, I'm not really sure yet. I mean, you ponies are actually rather human-like in appearance and build, despite being equines, especially the mares. So...yes, I think you and the other five girls are very pretty." He concluded sincerly.

Twilight smiled slightly, using her hoof to hide her smile and blush. It wasn't everyday she received such compliments from a male...

The doorbell rang and they looked over to see Rainbow Dash enter the library, carrying a book in her mouth. She certainly looked much happier and peaceful now than she had in a long time, now able to give a truly honest smile to Spyro as she entered the tree.

"Hey Twilight." Rainbow Dash said as she set the book down on the desk, which was one of those Daring Do books he had seen her read. "Just coming by to return the book I borrowed, and get Spyro for our race today."

Twilight looked surprised. "That was fast! You checked out that book only last week."

"Hello? Did you forget who you're talking too?" Rainbow Dash asked with a cocked eyebrow. "My speed isn't *only* for flying. Besides, it was so awesome I couldn't put it down."

"Never took *you* for the reading type." Spyro stated.

Rainbow Dash blushed slightly, her blue fur making her cheeks turn purple. "Well, I'm not that type, really." She told him. "But I did make an exception with these Daring Do series."

"Daring Do, huh?" Spyro asked, using his magic to levitate the book to himself, reading the cover: Daring Do and the Eye of the Crimson Dragon. "Huh. Indiana Jones meets Tomb Raider."

"Huh?" Twilight and Rainbow Dash asked in unison.

"Just thinking of some human stuff like this." He stated with a wave of the claw, developing an sudden intense interest in the book he was now holding with his claws. "This looks interesting enough; hey, it must be good if *Rainbow* likes it."

"Hey!" Rainbow Dash snapped playfully.

Twilight giggled at the sight; it was good to see Rainbow Dash was getting along with Spyro.

Rainbow Dash's magenta eyes fell upon the page of the book Twilight was reading. "What the heck is that?" She asked, eyeing the creature on the picture oddly. "Another one of those freaky creatures from Spyro's world?" She asked, rather bluntly.

Twilight's cheerfulness turned to confusion at the cyan pony's words. "Well...yes." She began awkwardly. "This book is dedicated too the study of-"

"Boring!" Rainbow Dash announced, suddenly zooming over to Spyro and pushing him out the door. "Come on, purple boy! I've gotta race to win!" And with that, she shoved the purple kirin out the door and shut it before he or Twilight could utter a word.

The clear sky stretched for miles out, no end in sight to its limitless wonders. Celestia's Sun cast a warmth over the clouds and the lands beneath him, the earthen soil embracing the heat that the sun goddess had to offer. It was among these patches of clouds clumped together, that Spyro sat and contemplated. The air up here felt different then down below. It felt crisp, like the snowy mountain region peaks back in Prehistoria or Skylands on a clear day, but free of smoke, debris and dust the dragon was usually accustomed to, the air in Equestria felt...free. Granted back on the ground it was no different. But to a flyer, the changes in the currents and the scent was everything. Closing his eyes, Spyro took a few breaths, letting the air fill his lungs to capacity. Soon it was released in a low exhale, a few wispy tendrils of his breath could be seen through his flaring nostrils before it dissipated in the sun's warmth. It was always colder the higher one flew, but for a dragon, the temperature change was barely noticeable, given the thick, sturdy scales one they had.

"So, you just gonna sit up here all day and do nothing?" Rainbow Dash asked as she suddenly appeared next to him, looking cross and disappointed. "Thought a flyer such as yourself would have loved to get out of those stuffy buildings and take to the sky! Don't tell me your having second thoughts already!"

"You ever stopped for a moment, sat down and watched the world go by you, Rainbow?" The purple dragon asked in a wise tone. "Should try it sometime. Leave that high speed life of yours and just lean back, take everything around you. You'd be surprised on what you're missing out here."

Mock snoring came from behind him, and he turned to see Rainbow Dash pretending to be asleep.

Well, at least he tried.

With a light sigh, Spyro rose to his feet, testing the solidarity of the clouds he stood upon. Again the dragon pondered as to how these pegasi ponies could tear these fluffy white patches apart in a heart beat, yet use the same material to build their homes, sleep and stand on.

'Chalk it up to the magical properties of this world, probably.' Spyro thought to himself.

Unfurling his wings, the dragon took a few practice wing beats, getting the feel of the cooler air dancing off the skin membranes of his appendages. Rainbow Dash grinned as her own feathered wings unfurled, eager to take to the sky once more and just see what Spyro was like when he was fully alert and not half tired. Shifting his weight a little, the dragon took a quick glance around him, making sure no solo flying pegasi were out and that it was just him and the other pony up here and alone. The sounds of wings flapping between two flyers were heard, but it was just the two of them.

Then, just as his wings were getting the feel of the upper air around him, Spyro folded them once more, as though he suddenly lost interest. This surprised Rainbow Dash, the eager cyan pegasus antsy as she wanted to take off.

"H...Hey! What's the big idea, faking a take off prep?" She asked with a huff.

Spyro gave no answer. What the dragon did next, caught her by surprise:

He walked over to the edge of the cloud they were on, looked over the ledge and then...tipped over in a free fall.

Rainbow Dash nearly screamed in shock as he disappeared from view, darting over to catch sight of a Spyro visage slowly shrinking the faster he plummeted. The mare was at a loss for words, other then taking a grand leap off the edge herself and went for a dive.

'What the HAY is he doing?! Doesn't he know how to fly?' She thought to herself as she dove after him.

The wind whistled and roared in Spyro's ears, the feel of the updrafts pushed against his chest and limbs, while gravity took over. While any flyer would be frantic to start beating their wings in a desperate attempt to gain altitude, the dragon remained in a free fall. His legs tucked tightly against his chest, his tail flapping in the wind behind him while the rush of falling continued to pump adrenaline through his body. He could vaguely hear Rainbow Dash a couple hundred feet above him, yelling about pulling up or opening his wings. He paid no heed to her frantic warnings. He was in his element of flight. The grand thrill of being at the mercy of the air currents of freak gust of the wind, having no control over it no matter how skilled a pegasus or pony felt they were.

Just when he reached that point where it would be too late to start breaking the fall, instinct and years of experience kicked in. Veering to the right, his wings snapped open to catch an updraft,

pulling him sharply upwards as he rode it up and gained altitude almost immediately. Rainbow Dash yelped again as she darted past him, still falling towards the ground; she quickly followed suit and snapped her wings open, catching another updraft and began to give chase as Spyro rose higher and higher, passing the cloud cover and into clearer skies. It felt so exhilerating to take wing after spending a few days on the ground.

He heard Rainbow Dash's wings beating as she caught up, huffing and grumbling under her breath until she managed to drift alongside him. "What in Equestria were you *doing*?! You scared the crap outta me! Are you *trying* to give me a heart attack?!" She snapped angrily, gasping for breath.

Spyro chuckled. "So, you do feel concern for me." He stated as he landed on a nearby cloud, laughing afterwards as her face turned purple. "Come on, now. Don't tell me you didn't find that cool, because I know you did."

Rainbow Dash sighed as she too landed next to him on the same cloud, her blush slowly fading away. "Well, next time give me a warning or something! I nearly crashed thanks to you!" She said hotly.

"It was you who decided to save me." Spyro told her. "But that's what comes with loyalty, right? Throwing yourself in danger for your friends?"

She gave him a side smirk. "Yeah, yeah..." She stated. "Well, you're not getting out of this race. I've been wanting to see how fast you can go, but you've been too busy with the eggheads on the ground. Now that you're up here, don't think I'm letting you off the hook now!"

Spyro grinned competively, spreading his wings and getting into take off position. "Alright, pegasus. Show me what you can do." He growled boldly. Rainbow Dash grinned back in the same manner, her own body and wings readying as the soft yet daring rock-piano music began to play...

"First one to Cloudsdale wins! 3...2...1...GO!"

The word had barely left her lips before both pony and dragon shot forward as if fired from cannons, just as the music suddenly struck a powerful and exhilarating rock tune to it, the former leaving a streaking trail of rainbow colors behind her and the latter leaving a similar yet fiery streak of purple, gold, and orange behind him.

Their wings tore through the air, the world whizzing by as the fires of competition drove both of them to win; Rainbow Dash was leading by half her body length, but Spyro was catching up fast. Reality faded to them both. Nothing was existent other than the sky and themselves, each driven by the urge that had completely consumed their minds and souls: the urge to win.

Rainbow Dash: *I grace the skies*

You can barely see me as I fly by

Perfecting my awesome dives

A barrel roll or maybe five

Perhaps You'll be this fast one day

That was sarcasm by the way

But hey look at the bright side

You'll never prove me wrong if you don't try

I didn't get this good by standing by...

Think you got what it takes? Then take to the skyyyyyyyyyy!

Falling faster...flying higher...

Feeling the rush: my only desiiiiiire!

Heart is pounding, wings are beating

Live for the moment, Always competing

Think I'll quit now? Think I'll back down?

You got another thing coming if you think it's that easy

Muscles straining, no complaining

Mind on the goal, remember my training

Think I'll give up? Think I can't take a beating

No retreating...

No retreating...

No retreating...

No retreating...

Spyro had read about Cloudsdale, and seen pictures of it...but it was nothing until you saw it up close, as he was doing now as he and Rainbow Dash blasted through the sky and through the city. It truly was the greatest city in the sky, with the buildings floating majestically in the air, elaborate pillars and columns adorning them. The ancient Pegasi had been masters at crafting and shaping the clouds into works of art, to make their city truly spectacular. Spyro was glad to see they hadn't failed to disappoint, though his mind and soul was still focused on the race.

Pegasi everywhere in the city stopped to see the greatest flyer of the city engaged with a great purple dragon in a race, all of them awed or surprised at the sight.

Rainbow Dash: *You're pretty good, pal, I'll give you that*

But you can't clear the sky in 10 seconds flat

Danger's my middle name

Flying safely never gave me any fame

Perhaps you'll be this cool one day

That was sarcasm by the way

We'll race again but when your loyalty

Quitting's not an option you see

So don't think I'll go easy

Think you got what it takes? Then prove it to meeeeeee!

Heart is pounding, wings are beating

Live for the moment, Always competing

Think I'll quit now? Think I'll back down?

You got another thing coming if you think it's that easy

Muscles straining, no complaining

Mind on the goal, remember my training

Think I'll give up? Think I can't take a beating

No retreating...

No retreating...

No retreating...

No retreating!

Thump!

"*YEEEEESSS*!" Rainbow Dash cheered as she struck down on the cloud just milliseconds before Spyro had, zooming about again in thrilled celebration. "I WON!"

Spyro sat down to catch his breath, panting as he smiled at the sight of the celebrating pony. "You're very good...I'll give you that...Not very many creatures can outrace a dragon in flight." He told her, dropping down to a laying position; he could've said he was going easy on her or something to keep his pride up, but he decided to let her have the moment of glory she was obviously enjoying. She earned it, after all.

"You bet I am!" Rainbow Dash said confidently; it was evident that she, too, was tired from the over-use of her body, but she didn't seem as tired as Spyro was. "I *did* warn you, though: I'm the fastest mare in Equestria."

"That still leaves you pretty slow." Spyro said, unable to resist.

"Hey!"

"Kidding!" The dragon quickly stated with a grin. Rainbow Dash giggled good-naturedly.

Suddenly the clock on a distant cloud tower rung its mighty bells, gaining the cyan pegasus' attention. "Uh Oh! My lunch break is over! I gotta get back to work in the weather factory!" She told him, standing up and dusting her fur off. "That's where we make all the weather for Equestria; today's 'Bring a Relative to Work Day', but since I don't have any real relatives in Cloudsdale, I'm gonna take Scootaloo. She's gonna meet me there today."

Spyro gave a grin. "I bet she'll love that." He stated, standing up and flexing his wings. "You know...by the way she looks up to and admires you, that filly is pretty much your sister at heart."

Rainbow Dash nodded with a warm smile, taking to the skies. "Later!" She called back as Spyro began to leave himself.

An alley near the Weather Factory's Rainbow Pools, upper level near the Rainbow Generators:

'Don't these ponies have anything decent *to eat around here?!'* Venom snarled mentally alongside his vocal snarls of frustration, his fangs digging through the fifth tipped trash can in a row, spilling flith and garbage all over the smooth, clean, marble-like floor. The soothing sound of running water from the rainbow pool fountains did nothing to lift his nasty mood, his hunger merely increasing his already foul temper.

He had been digging through garbage cans for the past hour looking for some form of meat to fill his gullet with, and as of yet had found nothing. He was using his sharp teeth and strong jaws to tear through the trash for food, but all he could find food wise was the remains of plants or plant-based food, usually the half-eaten, thrown-away meals from the workers' lunchboxes. Who the hell eats sandwiches made of flowers?!

He, like all Ophionaga, were opprotunistic feeders: unlike their 'pure snake' relatives, their jaws, teeth, were strong enough to tear and rip apart pieces of prey instead of just swallowing the whole thing down at once and take weeks to digest. This gave them many more choices for food, though their warm-blooded nature and ravenous appetites meant they had to eat a lot more and more often than true snakes. Though most were loners, like true snakes, some smaller and weaker species would hunt in packs to being down larger prey, and none of the species were above scavenging the carcasses of other kills (or in this case, trash cans). Ophionaga were very adaptable to any lifestyle and environment, which explains their abundant success as a species.

But even they had their limits, such as no food whatsoever.

'Don't these ponies know of roast beef or steak?!' He growled in frustration, finally giving up on his current trash-can and using his tail to smack it away: it rolled away and landed in the rainbow colored-river, flowing over the waterfall and into the pool below, its flith and sewage turning the bright colors sickly and polluted. He then turned to the sixth can, which he uncerimoniousl knocked over and spilled the contents all over the floor. This time, he scored a meal.

'Pizza!' He cheered mentally, pouncing on the cardboard box and ripping it open with his tailblade; he found three, slightly stale pieces of thankfully no-topping pizza inside, which he quickly dug into with a ferocious hunger; it wouldn't fill his stomach, but it would help the constant gnawing of emptiness.

'Honestly, how on earth did they become the dominent species of this world...even this *world...if they aren't carnivores?'* He asked in frustration as he slithered away from the mess, his long, trailing body gliding across the smooth surface like a liquid. *'It's a universal rule; only predators rise to sentinence due to being the ones needing to adapt, grow smarter and stronger, and evolve higher than herbivores to live...unless these ponies don't have natural predators...'*

He paused, frowning in annoyance and frustration.

'Of course *they don't have natural 're magical talking* ponies*.'* He growled mentally, saying 'ponies' with mocking sarcasm. *'Don't hurt the* pretty little ponies*; they might get their* feelings *hurt'! UGH! Can this world get any more* pathetic*?!'*

He heard the gates on the lower level open, signaling that someone was entering.

'I had to ask.' He stated flatly, looking down from his high perch to see who was here. *'Well, I believe its high-time for some 'dark intervention'."*

"Rainbow Daaaaaaaaaash!" Scootaloo called as she entered the Rainbow Pools, looking about for her idol. "I'm heeeeeeeeere! Rainbow? Hellooooooooo?!"

No answer.

The orange filly looked confused, wondering where the cyan pegasus could be. She had arrived rather early to the weather factory, eager to spend Bring a Relative to Work Day with her idol Rainbow Dash, though now she was questioning if the method of arriving early and waiting was really the best way to do it.

She may not be Rainbow Dash's true sister, but Scootaloo had always viewed her idol as one...the sister she never had. She had often wanted to tell Rainbow Dash this, but was afraid of the answer; what if she didn't like the idea? What if she thought it was stupid? What if she was accepted it but then she did something that messed it up and made Rainbow Dash hate her?

It was a fear that had kept her from speaking her heart for years.

Despite the fact she could never be her sister, she could still be her number-one fan, and today was her chance to prove to Rainbow Dash how much she really admired her.

This was going to be the best day ever!

...if only she could find Rainbow Dash.

'Where is everypony?' The orange filly asked herself. *'Isn't Lunch Break over yet? When will it-'*

"WOAH! What happened here?!" She asked in surprise, eyes wide with the emotion.

The Rainbow Pools Dock was a complete wreck. Trash cans and their noxious content were spilled all over the place, staining the pure white floors and filling the sky around the place with a flithy stench; also, it had been dumped into rainbow vats, the beautiful wonders of nature now resembled pools of sewage.

She heard something slide up behind her; it sounded like a large, long piece of mass sliding across the floor. Before she could turn around, a sharp, snarling hiss, like that of a snake but much louder, filled the air, causing the fur on the back of her neck to stand on end, her legs stiffening in fear.

Swallowing in fear, she slowly turned around, half expecting to see some dumb colt playing another prank on her.

Instead, she turned around and looked up to see the most terrifying sight she had ever seen in her entire life toward over her, its golden eyes glaring at her in dark, cruel amusement.

It was a giant serpent that resembled a cross between a King Cobra and an Anaconda, roughly about thirty feet long in length, the thickest section of it's body(the 'chest') being as thick as a small barrel, and head currently held up at around six feet. The serpentine form resembled that of any snake: long, limbless, and serpentine, most like a cobra's but much bigger, the super long

tail ending in a thin, blue, sharp-looking tailblade shaped like a straight dagger blade. It had a large cobra's neck-frill, with scary markings on the back. The flat, diamond-shaped head was like that of a viper, and was about the size of Winona, Applejack's border collie: slightly smaller than Spyro's head, with short jaws filled with small but razor-sharp teeth, as well as a pair of large, venomous, needle-like fangs and a long, black, forked tongue. The large eyes had sharp yellow eyes with orange irises surrounding silted pupils, and two blue, blade-like horns that grew backwards from the eyeridges; the two horns started a trail of smaller, sharp dorsal spikes of the same shape and color that ran down the spine all the way to the tailblade. The scaly snake-like skin was a bright, sharp, electric-green in color, with darker green diamond-back markings covering and running down the spine, with golden, overlapping scales covering the underbelly. It also had a strange blue horizontal stripe running down from each of its eyes all the way down the sides of its body all the way to the tailtip.

Scootaloo went stiff, her eyes wide with terror as the serpent closed its frill and lowered its head back to the ground, slithering up to her in an stalking manner, black tongue flicking out and pupils silting to their narrowest. The pegasus filly tried to scream in terror, but it stuck in her throat, and she could only tremble as she stared into those cold, reptilian eyes glaring her down.

"You've picked a *bad* time to be wondering about alone, little *morsel*..." Venom hissed as he lifted his head up, his frill explaining again to make himself more intimidating. "What, might I ask, do you think you doing in *my* new territory?"

Scootaloo whimpered softly, but spoke all the same. "Y-Y-Your t-territory?" She asked in stutters. "T-T-This is the w-w-weather f-f-factory, where we make all of E-E-Equestria's weather."

"Well, it's *mine* now." Venom hissed with a cruel grin as he lowered his head down to Scootaloo's level, flicking his tongue in Scootaloo's face. "And with it under my control, that means the weather itself is now mine to control! And when the land ponies start receiving the bad end of the weather coming from your city, *there will be War*! Just what this world's doctor ordered!"

"W-What?! B-B-But you can't d-do that!" Scootaloo insisted, horrified by the snake's words.

Venom scoffed, turning around and slithering away. "Can and will, Blank Flank." He stated flatly. "I'll have this world flipped around to one large pony battlefield before the year's end, and there's no one in your pathetic world of rainbows and smiley faces that can stop me."

"Rainbow Dash can!" Scootaloo snapped angrily, briefly forgetting her fear in her anger of being called 'Blank Flank' and 'pathetic'.

The snake stopped.

"Who's 'Rainbow Dash'?" He asked, turning back to the orange filly with intrigued eyes. "Your big sister, perhaps? Sounds like it coming from you."

Scootaloo cowered back a bit when she saw those horrible eyes glaring into her own, but boldly stood her ground for her idol. "Well, n-no...but she's the best pony ever!" She said bravely. "She's loyal, fast, strong, and not afraid of *anything*! She'll stop you! Just you wait and see!"

"Oh, *really*?" Venom asked in a dark challenge. Scootaloo tried to flee, but Venom was quicker; spinning his body and whiplashing his tail forward, the end of it lashing out and coiling around the orange filly and pulling her back to the Emperor Cobra. Scootaloo screamed as she was jerked back, but tea tail's tip came around and covered her mouth, the deadly blade perched dangerously next to her neck.

Venom chuckled darkly as he lifted her up to his face. "Well, we'll just have to put that bravery to the test." He snarled darkly. "By the time I'm done with her, she'll be screaming and wailing like a filly!"

Scootaloo was sure she was going to die, her tears of terror showing her fear, but she stood strong for her idol, knowing she would've done the same for her. "You'll never be able to hurt her!" She snapped once she managed to wriggle her mouth out from behind his coils. "She's the fastest pony in all of Equestria! And even if you could go that fast, you'd still never be able to catch her!"

"Perhaps." Venom admitted, the dark smugness never leaving his glaring eyes as he flexed his fangs. "But why would I need to chase her...when I can use *you* as *bait* to get her to come to me?"

A half-hour later:

Rainbow Dash was panting for breath as she landed in front of the Weather Factory and ran inside, finding herself in the main hall where, on the walls, hung the work outfits for each pegasi worker. She quickly slipped into her white coat and matching hardhat, the traditional work outfit of the weather factory, and ran to the Rainbow Pools.

"Sorry I'm late, Scoots!" She called as she burst out into the area. "I was just on my way here when-...what in the hay?!" She exclaimed when she saw the carnage of the weather factory. Multiple pegasi were rushing about, trying to either clean up the mess or tend to the pegasi who had arrived before them...who seemed to be under some sort of spell...

And Scootaloo was no where to be found.

"What happened here?!" Rainbow Dash asked as she trotted over to a pegasus mare with pale-orange coat and a pale-magenta mane/tail/eyes.

"I don't know." The mare told her. "We opened the factory for the day to find it like this. The Cloud Boils have over-heated and fried their systems, the SnowFlakes for this winter have all been completely shattered, and the Rainbows are ruined! Not ony that, but someone put all of

the morning-shift workers under some sort of spell; we've tried to break it, but nothing's working! It'll take weeks to recover from all this!"

Rainbow Dash looked down at her hooves; a reptilian footprint with claws as long as her leg was smeared onto the ground in front of her. It was only one of many footprints that led toward the Rainbow Factory, the large building from which the rainbow rivers were coming from.

She frowned. *'Oh no! It must be another one of those monsters from Spyro's world!'* She thought to herself. *'Oh man! Why did Spyro have to leave* now *of all times?! He could deal with this sorta thing!'*

A scream of terror echoed through the sky.

Rainbow Dash paled the second the sound reached her ears, her blood turning to ice in her veins. It was Scootaloo! She'd recognize that voice anywhere...and it was coming from the Rainbow Factory.

Where the footprints were leading too.

"No...no no *no*!" Rainbow Dash cried; she didn't even give the thought of going to get Spyro a second chance. She was off the ground and blazing full speed toward the factory's main doors in mere milliseconds. *'Please not Scootaloo, Please not Scootaloo, Please not Scootaloo, Please not Scootaloo...'* She repetively begged in her mind as she slammed her way through the large doors, nearly tearing them off their mighty hinges.

The Rainbow Factory was a place Rainbow Dash never liked to be, even slightly scared of the place; it was back in the days of Junior Flight Camp when a bunch of bullies told the 'campfire' story about how the factory made its rainbows with the different body parts and colors of young pegasi who failed Flight School, and that those with the most color were the ones they used most. Needless to say, young Rainbow Dash was the one who suffered the scariest nightmares from those stories. The factory itself was dark and confined of small rooms , with machines that made deep, scary sounds as they created the colors, thanks to the colors themselves having to be kept out of the sunlight during creation, the dark and sinister setting only fueling the stories' terror; she had once gotten lost in the factory thanks to the same bullies before, and it terrified her.

But it wasn't nearly as terrifying as losing the filly that could very well be her little sister...but she had to be careful; Scootaloo was in here, but also was that creature...

Soon, she heard frightened whimpers coming from the starway leading down to the boiler room; gathering her courage, Rainbow Dash quickly galloped in the direction of the noise, descending the stairs faster than the eye could probably follow. Rounding the turn, she stopped to feel her heart fill with both relief and dread.

Scootaloo was alive, she could tell by her breathing, but that was the only sign she could be alive. The orange filly was lying near the Great Furnace, fused to the floor with a strange, smily

substance covering most of her body, her fur ruffled and a few bruises and scratches adorning her body. Tear were running down her face in waterfalls, whimpering and trembling in terror.

"Scootaloo!" Rainbow Dash cried, quickly galloping over to the filly.

Scootaloo gasped as she opened her eyes. Her reaction wasn't one Rainbow Dash had been expected; it was one of fear, as if she was the last person the filly wanted to see.

"R-Rainbow Dash! No, go away!" She said in a panicked tone.

Rainbow Dash was utterly shocked, but ingored the filly's pleas. "No, Scoots. I'm not going without-"

"It's a trap! H-He's right above-!"

No sooner did the word 'trap' leave Scootaloo's mouth did Rainbow Dash suddenly drop to the floor, flattening herself down faster than the eye could follow; she felt the blaze of wind streak over her head as a streak of green zoomed over her mere milliseconds before she dropped. An inpony shrieking hiss rang out through the room as a monstrous serpent came crashing down from above, tumbling across the floor before crashing against the wall in a tangle of coils and spikes.

"*DAMMIT*!" Venom shouted angrily as he untangled his seemingly endless body and facing his opponent, lifting his head up and opening his frill menacingly to glare at the cyan pegasus. "Well, you *are* fast, I'll give you *that* much." He admitted grudgingly.

Rainbow Dash's eyes were wide with shock and fear; she recognized the creature from the one she had seen in Twilight's new book; man, if only she had actually bothered to pay attention!

"What...what the *hell are you*?!" She whispered, but loud enough for everyone to hear.

The snake looked genuinely surprised at her language, before grinning darkly. "*Finally*! One of you ponies with *spine*!" He cackled. "I guess you've got as much of it as that orange filly there claimed you have after all." He stated, motioning his tailblade to Scootaloo, who was clinging to Rainbow Dash's left foreleg in utter terror.

Rainbow Dash's expression changed from fear to anger. "*You* did this to her!" She exclaimed. "You're the one who ruined the Weather Factory!"

The Ophionaga rolled his eyes. "*No*! *Really*?!" He asked in mock surprise, before his face became one of annoyance. "Of course it was me! It wasn't your 'Princess Celestia', for crying out loud! How long did ya take to figure all *that* out, Sherlock?" He asked sarcastically.

"Why?" She then asked.

"Aw, what's wrong?" He asked in a mocking baby tone. "Did I huwt your feewings and your widdle world of fweindship?"

Rainbow Dash's eyes narrowed in annoyance. "Oh great. You're one of *those* guys." She muttered, recalling all the male griffin punks from flight camp that acted the same way toward ponies as he was.

"You bet I am, sister." He said with a fanged grin. "Honestly, how could any male, even from your race, not be, considering how pathetic this world is?"

"*Excuse* me?!" The cyan pegasus snarled angrily, spreading her wings in a battle-ready position.

"You heard me." He hissed as they begen circling each other, the Emperor Cobra keeping his frill opened as he stayed in the striking position, ready to lunge into battle. "I mean, come *on*! Look at this place! All this sunshine, ponies, bunnies, flowers, love, friendship, and...and..." He gagged. "PINK! Oui, and to think I'm still hungry after all this!"

"You take that back!" Rainbow Dash snapped angrily; Scootaloo thought she could see steam coming from her idol's ears.

Venom, however, took this opprotunity to entice the pony. "*Oooh*, scary!" He teased, his eyes beginning to crackle with that green/yellow energy from before. "You don't actually think you're a match for *me*, do you?"

Right after those words left his jaws, his body burst into a storm of green lightning, the power of the Serpentine charging through his body, shifting it into an even more powerful form: the form of an Ophionaga.

His Ophionaga form was like that of a dragon: the body a cat/dinosaur fushion, though slimmer than a dragon's and lacking wings, walking upright on all fours with his long tail held out for balance. The height was taller than a full grown human, about seven feet tall and now twenty feet in length: a head shorter than Spyro and the other three monsters, smaller than all of them by mass, but just as long as the dragon was. The long, slender hind legs were like that of a dinosaur's, though much more flexible, while the long, slender arms were almost like those of a human. The dinosaur-like hands had three fingers and one thumb each, the fingers/thumb each ending in a long, slender, razor-sharp claw that looked capable of tearing through sheet metal, and his dinosaur-like toes had three clawed toes. The head, horns, eyes, frill, and spikes remained the same, the neck being about the same to its body as Spyro's was to his, the frill making up most of the neck. The tail made up even more of the body length than Spyro's did, now resembling a saurian's flexible tail, the sharp spines and now-thicker and spiked tailblade making it a deadly, saw-bladed whip. The colors were all the same, except it lacked the two blue stripes.

"What'cha gonna do, *Lightning-Ass*? Cuddle me to death with your rainbow mane?" He teased, flecking his claws in a taunting manner. "Please! You pony are so pathetic, you couldn't even beat up a *butterfly* to save your life, not that you need to in your *'widdle wowld of fwiendship and hawmony* that looked like it jumped out of a cartoon'!"

That did it. With a rage-filled yet slighty-comical scream, Rainbow Dash threw herself at the giant cobra monster, tackling into his chest and sending him to the ground. The two thrashed and tumbled across the floor in a fight cloud, the cyan pegasus driven to attack by the fiery rage made by the cobra's insults, and the green cobra driven by the thrill of the battle against a surprisingly worthy, if ridiculous, opponent.

"TAKE IT BACK!"

"The sun and flowers in your world have smiley face on them!"

"TAKE IT BACK!"

"I bet you ponies poop out rainbows and cinnamon buns!"

"TAKE IT BACK!"

"You reproduce through the stork bringing the babies gag, don't ya?!"

"**TAKE IT BACK!**"

"TAKE BACK *THIS*!" Venom shouted as he threw himself at the pegasus, both creatures flying off the ledge and toward the windows.

SMASH!

The pegasi ponies that were in the Main Square were thrown from their peaceful state of mind when one of the windows of the Rainbow Factory above them suddenly shattered as two forms came barreling through it, plummeting from the sky and crashing into the cloud street on their level. One was Rainbow Dash, a mare many here recognized, but the other was a terrifying cobra-like monster with limbs and green scales.

Rainbow Dash groaned in pain as she struggled to stand up, stinging burns coming from multiple places on her body: she had a few scratches from the glass she smashed through, including a cut vertically through her right eyebrow she had gotten from his claw, a bit of blood running down the side of her face. She panted for breath as she stood up, glaring up at her opponent.

"Now that's just *cheating*." Venom stated as he rolled over onto his belly, poking at the cloud beneath him. The Ophionaga was completely unharmed, his tough scales giving him protection against glass shards.

The ponies around them screamed at the sight of the Emperor Cobra, all taking off or galloping away in terror.

"Oh sure! Leave your fellow pegasus for the snake to eat while you get away safety!" Venom snapped at the fleeing ponies. "Typical Herbivores!"

Rainbow Dash paused. "Wait...why do you care?" She asked. "Weren't you against the whole 'friendship and love' thing?"

"Only finding disgust with the usual herbivore way of life: every grass-muncher out for himself! Oh well, that's what you would expect from ponies!" He stated uncaringly, picking at his claws causally.

Rainbow Dash growled under her breath, getting very tired of his constant insults...until one suddenly popped into her mind, causing her to grin evilly:

"Yeah? Well, at least my species isn't food for a bunch of overgrown weasels, cobra." She hissed.

But the Emperor Cobra merely laughed at her attempt to insult him. "Some predators *they* were." He laughed. "Yes, the mongoose race killed and fed on our true serpent brothers, but we Ophionaga wiped them about into extinction, killing them off by the very same advantages they once had." He lifted his hand and flexed his claws, making the slashing-against-metal sound when they scraped against each other. "And now that human beings are out of the picture, we reptiles once again rule the worlds as we did during the Dinosaur Era! Now, all that's left is to claim this world from you mammalian ponies and insure our dominance in the universe!"

"We mammals have lost...but we once ruled over your kind all the same. That's all that matters."

Venom growled angrily before leaping at the pegasus with an ear-splitting hissing shriek of a roar, jaws open and claws bared. It was thanks to her incredible speed that Rainbow Dash barely missed having her head torn off by his claws, jumping backwards and upwards at the last moment, the Ophionaga crashing down beneath her on the cloudy street.

And thus the battle began.

Times are strange

We got a free upgrade for

Snakes on a Plane.

*F*** 'em, I don't care.*

Bought the cheap champagne,

we're going down in flames, hey!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

So kiss me goodbye!

Honey, I'm gonna make it out alive!

So kiss me goodbye!

I can see the venom in their eyes!

Goodbye!

With an angry snarl, he whipped his super long tail upwards in a scorpion-like fashion, the elongated spinal limb lashing forwards like a blade-tipped whip. Rainbow Dash cried in alarm as she barreled to the right, the heavy tailblade smashing a roman-styled pillar behind her, shattering it into multiple cloud chunks. He didn't let up the attack and kept firing his tail at her in the same manner repeatedly, smashing multiple chunks of buildings in the process: a hole in the wall, a few pillars smashed to pieces, even striking the Rain Fountain in the center of main square, causing an eruption of water to blast forth.

"Oh, great!" Rainbow Dash muttered as she landed on the cloud above him, her feathered wings now soaked, using a hoof to shield her eyes from the water as it rained down on her.

"Can't fly with wet wings, can ya?" Venom chuckled darkly. "Good! Then this will be like taking a baby from a crippled mother!"

Rainbow Dash's face scrunched up in disgust. "You're sick, you know that?" She asked.

"I'm a carnivore. Get used to it." He stated flatly. The back of his throat began to glow with the same light, more of his green lightning-like poisonous energy leaping from the sides of its mouth.

He fired what resembled a sharp-electric-green fireball at her from his mouth, which crackled with green-yellow lightning as it flew. Rainbow Dash jumped off the cloud, which the poison-ball exploded upon impact. Growling angrily, he continued firing more flaming projectiles at the pegasus, who dodged each one sent her way by running.

The Ophionaga then stood up on his hand legs, swinging his tail downwards upon a piece of flat debris; the motion caused it to catapult a sharp chunk of metal the size of a pony into the air, which Venom jumped after; spinning his body, he side-kicked the metal blade kung-fu-style, sending it flying after Rainbow Dash. The pegasus braked to a halt just as the blade-shaped shard embedded itself in the wall next to her, mere millimeters from cleaving her in half.

It's time to fly

to make the skies align

with the serpentine

lounging in their suits and ties.

Watch the whores parade

for the price of fame, hey.

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

So kiss me goodbye.

Honey I'm gonna make it out alive

So kiss me goodbye.

I can see the venom in their eyes

So kiss me goodbye.

Honey, I'm gonna make it out alive

So kiss me goodbye.

I can see the venom in their eyes

Goodbye.

Ladies and gentlemen

These snakes are slitherin'

with murder signs in their eyes

with tongues so reptilian

This reptile's venomous

with cold-blooded sentiment

No need for nervousness

It's just a little turbulence.

Venom glared at the pegasus before an idea struck his mind; hissing angrily and using her pause to his advantage, he opened his jaws widely, his foot-long fangs flexing out...and glowing with Serpentine energy. His head then struck downwards, biting into the cloud under the water-covered street with his fangs.

The hissing of acid filled the air as the water filled with the snake's charged poison, the deadly glowing-green fluids spreading out through the water like wildfire through dry fields; it flowed to the fountain, where it erupted through the broken waterwork in a gyser of glowing green poison.

Rainbow Dash screamed in blinding pain when the water raining down on her suddenly became acid, the smell of burning fur and flesh filling the air as her skin hissed from the deadly liquid. A drop of it landed in her cut, and it burned like fire. She stumbled backwards while screaming, striking at her own body, trying to stop the burning.

"Dodge this, Gay-Hair!" Venom spat, spinning his body in an almost break-dancing fashion, his tailblade swinging around in a wide half-sphere style while glowing with the same energy from his fangs.

So kiss me goodbye.

Honey I'm make it out alive

So kiss me goodbye.

I can see the venom in their eyes

So kiss me goodbye.

Honey, I'm gonna make it out alive

So kiss me goodbye.

I can see the venom in their eyes

Goodbye.

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

Oh, I'm ready for it! Come on, bring it!

POW!

This time he struck head-on, Rainbow Dash being too disoriented to concentrate, delivering a harsh blow to her back, sending the pony flying through the air before crashing into the cloud street below, tumbling forward like a limp doll before crashing into the side of a nearby building. Her entire body was screaming in pain; she had crashed into the wall against her chest, now barely able to breathe from having the air knocked out of her lungs. The muscles of her wings felt like they had been torn, both of them now sprained beyond their normal positions and swollen with bruises. The acid of the water, now dismissed slightly, still burned the bleeding cuts adorning her body and face. She laid on her right side, coughing up blood and whimpering in pain.

Before she could even try to stand up, Venom's clawed hand slammed down on top of her, pinning her down in place as he stood over her triumphantly.

"You should know better than to mess with the power of an Ophionaga, Rainbow *Crash*." He hissed darkly. "Now, not only have you failed your number-one fan, but you've failed your entire world. Some 'Element of Loyalty' you are."

"...At least...I tried..." Rainbow Dash coughed, trying to sound brave and hopeful...though tears of failure were forming in her magenta eyes.

The snake faltered at the sight of her tears, but quickly shook it off.

"You tried...but failed all the same. That's all that matters." He mocked. Keeping her pinned with his left hand, he then raised his right hand up, his claws growing to full length with the sword-slashing 'shing', readying the death blow.

Rainbow Dash closed her eyes and covered her face with her forehooves, gritting her teeth and cringing in terror, awaiting her death...

CHOMP!

"What the-?!" Venom exclaimed, looking backwards. Rainbow Dash dared a peek to see Scootaloo grabbing the end of Venom's tail at the base of his tailblade, pulling on it while sinking her teeth into it; it accomplished nothing, other than chipping Scootaloo's teeth against the scaly skin, but it was the bravest thing the filly had ever done in her life.

"Leave her alone!" Scootaloo snapped, continuing to pull on Venom's tail.

Venom snarled in anger. "I've had enough to you, snack-bite!" He spat, harshly jerking his tail from the filly's forehooves; the blade suddenly split four-ways, forming a grappling hand of sorts, which snatched up Scootaloo roughly, causing the filly to scream in terror. "Time to finally make yourself useful!"

He then brought his tail up above his head, which he turned upwards and opened his jaws wide, ready to finally get food in his gullet.

Rainbow Dash's eyes widened and dilated in horror.

This monster was about to kill her sister.

"NOOOOOO!" The cyan pegasus screamed, closing her eyes summoning every ounce of strength in her body to push against Venom's hand, not to save herself...but to save Scootaloo.

Then, something burst to life within her heart.

Venom stopped advancing on Scootaloo and looked down in shock to see Rainbow Dash's chest beginning to glow with all the colors of the rainbow. It was if something inside the pegasus' ribcage was glowing, softly at first, but quickly growing brighter and brighter. Then, to Venom's even greater surprise, she began to lift his hand off of her. He tried pushing back with his own strength and weight combined, and it was clear she was struggling against him, but she continued to grow stronger with each second.

Then her eyes flashed opened, revealing the irises to be glowing brilliantly with the same colors her chest was.

"YOU! WILL! *NOT! HARM!* ***MY! SISTER!***"

She then threw all four legs forward, smashing them against the Ophionaga's chest; an explosion of blinding rainbow light, similar to a Sonic Rainboom, blasted against the serpent beast.

Venom screamed an unholy shriek of pain as the impact blasted him off the pegasus, the blaze of a thousand lightning bolts scorching through his body; his body lit up with rainbow lightning coursing over his scales for seconds that felt like hours before the Emperor Cobra was sent rocketing through the air faster than Rainbow Dash could fly, crashing into what remained of the fountain with the impact of a speeding locomotive, destroying what was left of it and creating a massive crater upon impact.

Rainbow Dash got up to her hooves, her chest and eyes still glowing with that rainbow light. Her wounds were also glowing with the magic colors, her cuts sealing up and her wings restoring their original condition and shape, as if she hadn't been injured at all.

"Rainbow!" Scootaloo bawled as she ran up to the cyan pegasus, clinging to her glowing chest while sobbing her eyes out. "You're okay! I-I-I thought you were g-g-gonna...g-gonna..."

Rainbow Dash smiled softly, hugging Scootaloo against her. "It's okay, squirt...it's over now." She whispered to the filly.

"Guess again, ponies!" Venom snarled as he burst from the wreckage with an explosion of green Serpentine energy, the Emperor Cobra now back in serpent form. He was now longer slithering or walking...but flying! The blue stripes on his sides were glowing with a strange, bio-luminesent light of the same color, the air around those stripes rippling as if they were

generating heat waves like fire. His form slithered through the air in a serpentine fashion as if he was swimming, as if his body trailing after his head like a dancer's ribbon,his tailblade now fused back into one piece. His horns and spines were blazing with green serpentine fire, creating a mane of poisonous demonic fire running down his body, his eyes glowing bright yellow with rage.

He lashed forward through the air at the two ponies, jaws charging his breath power, ready to blast them to pieces with his poison fireballs, then-

"Stop." Rainbow Dash, who was still glowing, ordered.

Surprisingly, he did, the stern tone of her voice actually shaking him a bit...but he hid it well.

"Excuse me?!" He snarled in rage, his voice echoing with the hisses of a thousand angry vipers, his fiery green glow making his body appear a much darker green against the poisonous serpentine glare of his glowing flames. "You and I are not finished!"

"Finished with what?" Rainbow Dash asked sternly, yet with surprising calmness. "There wasn't anything going on to begin with. You're not serious about taking over a world or causing war; you're only acting that way to scare everypony in your big game of predator. You're just being a big bully."

"Oh, and just why do you believe that I'm what you claim I am?!" He growled, his face now only millimeters from her, his demonic eyes boring into her own. It was like a scene of legend: a glowing, winged angel radiating with the power of light and hope standing off against a demon serpent of poison and shadow in the ultimate battle of good versus evil.

And just like an angel, Rainbow Dash stared back calmly into the eyes before her, her own eyes glowing with the light of a rainbow.

"Because if you were serious about destroying us ponies...you would've killed Scootaloo in the factory when you had the chance."

Scootaloo watched the scene in complete awe and stunned silence; that dark glare on the serpent's face faltered, turning into a look of surprise, the glow of his eyes fading slowly back into their normal look and color.

"I can see that this is all an act." She told him calmly. "You act tough on the outside, but that's just to keep your feelings hidden. You've arrived in a strange world you've obviously never been to before, so it's safe to guess you're actually scared of this place, and therefore are acting tough to hide your fear."

"*SCARED*?!" Venom roared in anger, though his facade was slowly giving way, just as Rainbow Dash was expecting. "YOU'D THINK I'D BE SCARED OF *THIS* PATHETIC WORLD?!"

"Silly looking or not, you're still lost, and anyone would be scared if they were in your position." She continued calmly, despite the fact the snake looked ready to murder her. "But you don't want us to think you're scared and therefore weak, so you hide it under a scary predator act to keep your reputation and comfort safe; your kind may actually act like that back in your world, being meat-eaters and all, but here you could very well be the prey, if not by ponies then by other creatures here, and you know this."

A part of Venom wanted to strike her so hard; tear her apart. Rip her limb from limb. Pump her full of his venom and watch her writhe in an agonizing death...but her words were striking deep into him, killing off all willpower to do just that, the flames on his back dying down as his coils began trembling slightly...because she was telling the truth. How could she know this?!

"But even if you've gotten over your fear, at the same time, you actually value life: you may be able to bring yourself to kill animals for food, I bet, but even though you find some races, like us ponies, disgusting, you know that we are still living beings. Not your race, but still on the same at heart and mind...something you can't stand the thought of taking. Hurting, yes. Scaring, definately. But if you were serious about killing us, you would've killed Scootaloo before you even met me to begin with."

"W-Why do you think I feel this way?!" Venom asked angrily in one last desperate attempt to stay strong. "Why would I bother caring for something as small and pathetic as you?!"

Rainbow Dash gave him a sympathetic smile.

"Because that's how I used to be when I was a filly."

No one said anything.

She then stepped back, lowering her wings to her side. "You don't have to do this, and if I'm right, I know that you don't want to hurt us...but if you're *really* serious about taking over the world and being the top predator...then go ahead." She told him, raising her head up slightly to expose her throat to him. "Finish this."

Scootaloo gasped in terror; was Rainbow Dash really serious about this?! That monster was gonna *kill* her!

But when she saw Venom floating before them, that certainly in her mind was put to question.

The snake looked just as scared and emotionally shaken as she was, maybe even worse. A bit of him told him to do just that; stay the predator and prove this bitch wrong...so he slid forward, lowering his head down and, shaking like a timid animal approaching a human, slowly reached forward and placed his mouth over Rainbow Dash's neck in a biting position. Rainbow Dash closed her eyes, her breathing slightly increasing in fear, but she stayed strong and calm, her chest glowing brighter than ever.

Then, after a tense moment that felt like an eternity...the Emperor Cobra broke.

"GAAAAH! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!" He wailed as he pulled his head back, tears finally erupting from his reptilian eyes as he collapsed to the floor. "WHAT IS IT WITH YOU MYSTICAL MAGIC CREATURES AND YOUR DAMN HEART-MELTING SPEECHES?!"

Rainbow Dash sighed inwardly with relief; boy, she *really* felt like an egghead right now. "Usually, it's not my thing, but it turned out to be something you needed to hear." She told him as she hugged Scootaloo, who quickly and warmly returned the hug. The glow of her heart and eyes began to fade slowly, until finally it died down completely, her eyes returning to their normal color.

She then set the filly down, getting up and moving over to the broken snake; he stiffened at her approach, snarling weakly in response.

"Calm down. I'm not gonna bite. You did the right thing." She told him softly, petting his head.

"B-But what else can I do otherwise attacking you guys?" He asked timidly, no longer trying to mask her fear. "Being a predator is all I've ever known..."

Rainbow Dash did feel a bit of anger against Venom for what he had done to her home and friends, but seeing him curled up in that helpless pose like that, despite his size and power...formed the image of a small, rainbow-maned filly at Flight Camp, curled up in the corner, whimpering her tears free as the bullies left her there, still laughing at their handiwork...along with the memory of a certain griffin chick, despite being tough and cool, coaxing her out of her shell and helping her find her strength again.

"Then stop hiding in your shell and let friends help you change. It's that easy if you let it be." She told him with a warm smile, gently stroking the top of his head with her hoof. The same kind of action Glida would do to help her recover when they were younger.

Venom stared at her for a moment before breaking down into tears again. After several minutes of getting it out of his system, he sighed deeply, rubbing his wet face with his tailblade. "I'll admit it, your good. Not very many things can make me cry at all." He told her.

"And normally I'm not the type to actually be nice to my enemies, but I guess I found an exception with you." Rainbow Dash told him with a half-hearted giggle. Her giggling then stopped when something clicked in her mind. "Wait...you're *Venom*, right?"

Venom looked completely surprised. "And how do you know *that*?" He asked in a snapping tone, trying to regain his confidence. "Don't tell me that's another magic pony thing!"

"Your friend Spyro told me that you'd be arriving soon, just like Neublar and Savagera did." Rainbow Dash told him.

The Ophionaga looked even more surprised. "Wait! Spyro, Neublar, and Savagera are here too?!" He asked with surprise. "What the *hell is going on here*?!" He yelled to the sky.

"I show be asking you the same question!"

Venom paled, turning with Rainbow Dash and Scootaloo to see Spyro breaking cloud cover, the purple dragon glaring down with anger and disapproval at the Emperor Cobra. Accompanying him, in a large, purple hot-air balloon. were Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy (who wasn't riding in the balloon, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, Neublar, and even Savagera, all of them looking at the scene with mixed reactions.

"What's goin' on, RD?!" Applejack called to the cyan pegasus. "PonyVille's gettin' rained on by sewage, for pony sakes!"

Rainbow Dash, however, looked equally surprised. "I... I can't believe it!" Rainbow Dash exclaimed as Pinkie Pie landed the hot air balloon on the cloud. "You guys are here!"

"We sure are!" Pinkie Pie said as she jumped out of the hot air balloon.

"WAIT!" Rainbow Dash cried, but saw, to her surprise, Pinkie Pie plant her feet safely on the cloud. Twilight, Applejack, Rarity, Neublar, and Savagera all hopped out of the hot air balloon as well. "...How'd you do that? Only Pegasus ponies can walk on clouds."

Pinkie Pie performed a cartwheel over to Rainbow Dash. "Ha ha! Pretty cool, huh?" She then faced Venom. "Hi there! I'm Pinkie Pie, what's your name?"

Venom hissed angrily at the pink party pony, which he was already hating due to color and obnoxiousness, causing Pinkie Pie to shriek in fear and jump backwards. Rainbow Dash placed a hoof on Venom's 'shoulder', calming the snake down.

"It an easy spell that allows land ponies and non-flying creatures to walk on clouds." Twilight explained. "Princess Celestia taught it to me during my earlier lessons with spell casting...but seeing how that..." She shivered nervously. "...*snake* is already on the clouds, it can obviously fly by some means."

Spyro studied the practically destroyed main square with a stern gaze, turning his frown to Venom afterwards. "I assume this is *your* doing?" He asked sternly.

Venom looked nervous, but also offended; his body burst to life with Serpentine power as he shifted into his Ophionaga form, startling the ponies watching. "Hey, can't blame a guy for trying to find food and defend his predatory honor, right?" He snapped angrily.

"Honor is the last word anyone would use to describe your kind." Savagera muttered telepathically.

"Can't blame ya?!" Applejack snapped angrily, approaching the large snake boldly. "We'd just spent the past half-hour cleanin' up t'at mess you made in the Weather Factory! Ya nearly destroyed all of Equestria with t'at sewage rainin' down on our homes!"

"And don't forget the fact that you destroyed half of Cloudsdale, nearly *killed* one of our friends, and ate an innocent filly!" Neublar snapped in anger, even a bit shaken by the snake's actions. "What were you *thinking*?"

"Hey, I was lost, hungry, upset, and angry. You wouldn't have done any better than I did." Venom stated flatly, picking his claws coyly. "Besides, no one was hurt in the end, and that's all that really matters, so take your Gas-Blaster elsewhere, FrogApe."

Neublar glared at Venom angrily before simply snorting in disgust and lumbering back to where Fluttershy was standing. The cream colored pegasus placed a gentle hoof against Neublar wrist, even she feeling a little upset with the saurian snake.

"Who do you think you are?!" Twilight asked harshly.

Venom cocked a horned eye-ridge. "Who do *you* think *you* are?" He asked in return.

"My name is Twilight Sparkle, and I-"

"BWAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!" Venom fell backwards in a thrashing fit of laughter, his legs and tail lashing about as he cackled to the point of tears, pointing at Twilight as he did so. "*Twilight Sparkle*?! *Seriously*?!" He wheezed between laughs, pounding the floor with his fist. "Ha...heh heh...oh man..." He gasped for breath, using a claw to wipe a tear away from his eye. "If your *that* big a fan of the book, just say so!"

"Owwwwwww..." He groaned in pain as he lifted his head from the newly formed pile of rubble, the Ophionaga-shaped hole in the wall of the nearby palace being what was left of the target the fuming Twilight had blasted him toward. The purple unicorn stormed off, reciting the same mantra from before under her breath.

"Healthly tip for surviving this place: Never compare Twilight to the book of the same name." Spyro told him, but not without a hint of amusement in his voice.

PonyVille Library, a few hours later:

"So, this is where the dragons come for their migration? Not exactly what I had in mind when I imagined it." Venom commented as a timid Fluttershy was busy tending to his 'wounds', the Emperor Cobra now wrapped up in multiple places with white bandages, stuffing the fifth piece of pizza in his mouth afterwards. "Also, I like the new form; really mystical, and much cooler than these cartoony horses." He said after swallowing, shoving in another piece afterwards.

"Thanks." Spyro, now as a kirin, stated.

Twilight casted a brief side-glare at the snake before turning back to the Encyclopedia of Prehistorian Monsters, using her magic to flip through the book until she came to the page with Venom's species on it.

"Let's see...Leviathan Class...serpentine reptilians...Here it is!" She announced, reading the pages that told of and held the images of Venom's species in the different forms. "The Emperor Cobra, a subspecies of Ophionaja, a class of saurian-serpent predators that live all over Prehistoria." Twilight told all those around her. "All these species have the ability to shift between serpent and saurian forms, and this subspecies is well known for being one of the only Ophionaja capable of true flight. Well, that explains its ability to walk on clouds...or slither, in this case."

Venom nodded. "We can fly, but only in our serpent forms." He admitted, looking down at his lifted claw. "As you can see, my saurian form doesn't have the stripes that my serpent form has."

"So that's why you didn't chase after me when we fought." Rainbow Dash said with a bit of a smirk. Venom just looked cross.

Twilight looked back down at the book. "It says here that it is the largest, most feared, and most dangerous of the venomous Ophionaja, as well as one of the most aggressive and ferocious of all the species, well adapted to life in all kinds of habitats. It can swim, run, and fly at high speeds, but while it has very strong coils and jaw muscles, its body is built more for speed and agility than strength and durability. They are also very intelligent and cunning, even able to use hypnosis to defeat and even control their opponents. It, like all Ophionaja, has the Power of the Serpentine, which they can manipulate and use in multiples ways and attacks."

"What does it say about weaknesses." Applejack asked, giving Venom a glare; she still wasn't as forgiving with Venom as she had been with Savagera: what Savagera did was a mistake which he had fixed, whereas Venom did it on purpose and was obviously not going to be sorry anytime soon.

Twilight browsed through the pages, but found nothing. "Wait...Spyro, why are there no descriptions about monster weaknesses?" She asked.

"I didn't write any, just in case this book fell into the hands of humans or other enemy races. I have no intention of giving our secrets and to those that could very well try to destroy us." Spyro told her flatly.

"Oh, brilliant." Rarity muttered sourly. "Now we can't even control him should he turn on us again."

Venom snorted. "Yeah, so get used to it, ya wrinkly old hag." He spat.

That comment sucked the air right out of Rarity's lungs, making her eyes going wide and pupils shrink to pin-dots, but made both Rainbow Dash and Applejack burst into laughter. "Wha! beh! Wri...Wri...*WRINKLY OLD HAG*?! HOW *DARE* YOU, YOU...YOU...*TROGLODYTE*!"

Venom snorted, unimpressed. "Oh please, is that the best you can do?"

"Stop it, both of you! Don't worry, girls, Spyro and I can and will make sure he doesn't do anything more that he'll regret." Twilight assured them, ending Venom's coy attitude. "Until either we find a way to send you back home, or until you magically go back the same way you came, you, Neublar, Savagera, and any other of Spyro's friends that come here will be stuck here for good, so you better behave." The lavender unicorn told him warningly, poking him in the chest.

Venom groaned, but submitted. "Fine. I wasn't planning on really destroying this world anyway. I was just having a little fun scaring these ponies sensele-would you cut that out?!" He finally snapped at Fluttershy, causing the pegasus to squeak in surprise. "I'm perfectly fine!" He snarled, using his claws to tear the bandages off.

"B-But you should r-really see some help." Fluttershy murmured softly. "Well, if you want too, that is...but you-"

"I've taken a lot worse than getting blasted into a wall by an angry Vampire Unicorn." Venom stated flatly. "I'll be fine."

Twilight growled angrily, her face contorting in anger...before she merely sighed. "You're never gonna stop going on about that, are you?" She asked bitterly.

Venom merely grinned. "Nope. But if it'll make purple boy here happy and not all fire breathe-y, I'll tolerate this world." He told them all, throwing a friendly arm around Rainbow Dash, who merely rolled her eyes with an amused smile. "You ponies beat me at my own game, and therefore earned my respect. If you're all sunshine, bunnies, flowers, friendship, pixie dust, and pink, then that's fine with me. Free hugs and kisses for everypony!"

He barely had time to realize, in horror, the body/pony reversal before Pinkie Pie zoomed over and squeezed him tightly. "Hooray! I love free hugs!" She squealed with delight.

"I was being sarcastic!" Venom wheezed, miraculously pulling the pink party pony off of him. "And somepony plea- AGH! I did it again! *Please* tell me this isn't happening!" He screamed, eyes wide with comical terror.

Twilight, taking the advantage to get even for the Vampire jokes, grin evilly. "That's how the magic effect any speaking, non-dragon creature that enters this world." She said with a mirth of cruel amusement. "Better get use to it, cause you'll be saying that your entire time here."

"Damn." The Ophionaga growled under his breath.

Rainbow Dash giggled, when she felt a hoof tugging at her wing; she looked down to see Scootaloo, who had been sitting by her side since they had returned.

"Rainbow Dash?" The orange filly asked timidly, as if she was wanting to ask a question but was afraid of the answer. "Back in Cloudsdale...when you were fighting Venom...you called me your sister." She said with the same softness, earning a look of surprise and awe from every pony and monster in the room. "Did...did you really mean that?" She asked, beginning to tear up. "Can I...really be...your sister?"

Rainbow Dash was speechless. "You...you want to be my sister?" She asked in a hushed tone, unable to believe her ears.

This was it; no turning back now. So, despite her fear of rejection...Scootaloo nodded. "Yes...w-when my friends and I first became the Cutie Mark Crusaders, I only saw you as an awesome pony who I wanted to be like when I grew up. B-But everyday I see Applebloom and Sweetie Belle with their own sisters...their own *family*. They always seemed so happy together...but I never had anyone like that. It was then I began to see that you were more than just an awesome pony to me. I-I-I look up to you, always follow your advice and ways, a-and I...I...*I love you, Rainbow Dash*!" She finally cried, throwing her arms around Rainbow Dash's waist, hugging tightly as the tears were now flowing freely down her cheeks. "I always wanted you to be my big sister...I-I-I just never saw it before...I love you, Rainbow..."

Silence filled the room, minus the soft, muffled sobs Scootaloo wept as she buried her face into the cyan fur.

Rainbow Dash looked down at the filly hugging her tightly in stunned silence...tears brimming in her magenta eyes. She couldn't speak; the lump in her throat had grown too large for that. So she just bent down and, after gently pulling Scootaloo's arms from her waist, wrapped her own arms around the orange filly in a tight hug, nuzzling her new sister's cheek as the orange filly renewed her embrace around her neck, tears flowing freely down both of their cheeks.

Then Rainbow Dash muttered the six words that Scootaloo had always wanted to hear her say.

"I love you too, little sister."

Twilight couldn't stop her own tears of joy as she watched the two newly-bonded siblings hugging and weeping in pure happiness. Spyro kept his face calm, but he didn't even try to stop the smile form on his face or the tears run down his face. Fluttershy was right-out sobbing with joy, hugging the comforting arm that Neublar had wrapped around her. Neublar himself watched the scene with a warm smile, his own warm smile accompanied by brimming tears. Applejack grinned, using her hat to partially cover her face, hiding her own warmth that was flowing from her own eyes. Pinkie Pie was bawling her eyes out, the tears coming out in two large fountains as she used a tissue to blow her nose. Rarity was also being over-dramatic, using her own handkerchef to blow her nose and wipe her eyes. Savagera, one of the only ones not crying, watched the scene in a calm yet respectful silence, using own features warmed by the

heart-warming scene before him. And Venom...was trying to hide his face with his tail as he sniffed, wiping his teary eyes with his wrist.

"I saw that, partner." Applejack said in a warm tone.

Venom stiffened at her words, but gave in, his sobs becoming more pronounced. "Aw, man! You ponies are gonna be the death of me! I can just tell!" He hiccuped, unable to hide his emotions.

All the girls, along with Spyro and Neublar as well, managed to laugh gently at his statement, the tearful, heart-warming moment followed by the wonderful sound and feeling of laughter.

No one could ask for a more beautiful way to end the night.

Scootaloo smiled as she snuggled against Rainbow Dash's chest, tears still fresh in her eyes.

This really had turned out to be the best day ever.

Song(s): No Retreating - an original brony song by ElectroKaplosion

Snakes on a Plane (Bring It!) - by Cobra Starship, Snakes of a Plane Original Soundtrack

(A/N: That last scene with Rainbow Dash and Scootaloo actually made me cry; it didn't help the fact I was listening to Goodnight, My Angel by Celtic Woman while typing it. I hope you enjoyed it as well.

Season Three is* FINALLY *here! HOORAY! I've watched all of the newest episodes so far and will continue to do watch the rest as they come; I've also learned that they have a Season Four in planning as we speak! I will use the season three episodes in my story, but after I've got a decent story about them.)

Chapter 10: Boast Busters

10. Boast Busters

CHAPTER IX: BOAST BUSTERS

Fields outside of PonyVille, three days since Venom's arrival:

"Alright, Spyro. Concentrate." Twilight said softly, not to disturbed his concentration. "Focus your magic, select the target, and will it to happen."

Spyro, in his dragon form, nodded. "Okay...here goes." He stated, turning his attention to Spike, who was standing about two yards away and was the target for their practice session. Spyro gritted his teeth as he summoned his magic, his horns began to glow as he focused on Spike, whose face was enveloped in Spyro's dark purple fiery magic-aura...

...and soon after, from Spike's face, magically sprouted a black mustache.

"Ha Ha! You did it!" Spike cheered, still sporting the mustache, running over to a checklist set up nearby and checking off another sentence on the list with a red check mark. "Growing Magic. That's number twenty-five! Twenty-five different kinds of tricks...and counting." He told them, earning a small grin from Spyro and a proud look from Twilight. "And I say *this* is the best trick so far." He then said in a seducing tone, admiring himself in a hand-held mirror he suddenly produced from behind himself. "*Hello*, Rarity! What's that? ah, it's nothing...just my *awesome* mustache!" He said, chuckling to himself afterwards.

"Sorry, Romeo." Twilight giggled, her horn glowing. "As attractive and enticing as you look, it's just for practice and it's gotta go."

"Wait!" Spike began, but the mustache lasted only a second in Twilight's magic before disappearing completely. "Awwwwww, rats..." He whined, earning a giggle from Twilight.

Spyro, however, looked confused. "I still don't get how you can grow a mustache on Spike. We're dragons; we don't grow hair." He stated.

Twilight shrugged with a smile. "It's *magic*." She told him coyly.

The purple dragon rolled his eyes. "That's your answer for *everything* weird in this world...except for Pinkie Pie." He stated flatly.

Twilight giggled again. "Well, I think that's enough lessons for today. How 'bout lunch?" She offered. "I'll pay."

"Sure." Spyro said, using his magic to lift their saddlebags onto his shoulder before following Twilight and Spike back to PonyVille.

PonyVille:

"Twenty-five, Spyro! Twenty-five different kind of tricks, and counting!" Spike continued as they walked down the street toward Restaurant Square, which was where SugarCube Corner and the other dining places of PonyVille were located. "And that's just the tricks! You've already got all kinds of magic ability and power! It's so awesome!"

Spyro, now in kirin form, smiled at his own number-one fan. "Thanks Spike, but you have to remember: I'm just learning what Twilight's teaching me." He reminded the dragon. "She's the true master of magic here."

Twilight blushed at his compliment. "Come on, guys. I'm not really a master of magic." She said modestly.

"Not yet, anyway." Spyro stated wisely. "And even then, you probably have more magic than all the unicorns here in PonyVile combined. Most unicorns only have a small amount of magic that is only good for their special talents, like Rarity: she only has levitation, a Dress Forming spell, and her Gem Tracking spell; spells used for her talent in making beautiful outfits."

"Most ponies normally do." Twilight told him as they continued down the street, passing ponies as they talked. "Normally, unicorns have basic levitation, which is only as strong as their magic power is, along with certain abilities that matches their special talents, like Rarity as you explained. But what if a unicorn's special ability *is* magic *itself*?"

"Like you, Twilight." Spike stated, pointing at the unicorn's horn. "And you know a ton of magic!"

"Oh, Spike, stop." Twilight said sheepishly. "I'm sure there are lots of ponies right here in PonyVille who know as much magic as me."

"Are you kidding? I don't think there's another unicorn in all of Equestria with your kind of ability, Twilight." Spike told her, causing her to grin sheepishly.

"GAIN WAY! COMIN' THROUGH!" A rather dull-sounding voice, like someone absolutely stupid was speaking, suddenly yelled. Twilight and Spyro barely had time to jump out of the way as two young colts came barrelling down the streets, though Spike wasn't fast enough and got himself caught up in their galloping.

One couldn't ask for a more odd-ballish pair of boys, both of them unicorns; Spyro recognized them as the ones Venom had rather rudely nicknamed 'Bloaty and Dickhead'. 'Bloaty' was really short and tubby, with bluish-grey fur, spiky brown/orange stumps of a mane and tail, buck teeth, and a cutie mark of a pair of scissors. 'Dickhead' was really tall for a foal, with long lanky legs and neck, brownish-yellow fur, floppy teal-green mane and tail, huge ears, and a cutie mark of a purple-and-pink snail.

"Snips! Snails! W-What's going on?!" Spike cried, struggling desperately to hang on.

Both colts, now officially known as Snips and Snails, braked to a halt, sending Spike flying off their faces. "Haven't you heard? There's a new unicorn in town!" The latter told him.

"Yeah!" Snips said excitedly while bouncing up and down, his wheezy, high-pitched voice making him sound like he was hyperventilating. "They-they say she's got more magical powers than any other unicorn ever!"

That got both Twilight's and Spyro's attention. Another unicorn more powerful than the Element of Magic herself? This Spyro had to see.

"Really?" Twilight asked in a worried tone.

Spike, however, didn't believe for one second. "Aw, now way! That honor goes to Twilight here." He told them, motioning to the lavender unicorn, making her blush with a smile.

"Where is this unicorn?" Twilight asked.

"She's in the town square! Come on!" Snails told them, jumping over Spike and continuing his run to Main Square.

"Yeah, come on!" Snips squealed, running straight and causing Spike to jump over his head. "Whooooooooooooo!"

Spyro growled in annoyance. Even he had to agree with Venom for once; those two's very presence was aggravating. He and Twilight looked at each other before they and Spike took off after the two colts, wanting to see this unicorn for themselves.

Main Square, right in front of Main Hall:

Twilight, Spyro, and Spike arrived at the Main Square to see a huge crowd of at least 200 ponies gathered in front of a large traveler's wagon that opened out into a stage, complete with blue theater curtains and all sorts of weird decorations. The purple trio worked their way through the crowd to the front, where they found Rarity, Applejack, Rainbow Dash, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Neublar, Venom, and Savagera all standing/sitting/coiled up in front of the stage, watching as a loud voice suddenly spoke up.

"Come one, come all!" A female voice announced. "Come and witness the amazing magic of the Great and Powerful Trixie!"

There was an explosion of blue magic smoke, which cleared away to reveal this 'Great and Powerful Trixie'.

Trixie was a unicorn pony (or at least she was supposed to be; Spyro couldn't tell thanks to her hat), around the same age and height as the Twilight and the other girls. Her fur was a bright sapphire blue in color, while her mane and tail were a brilliant sliver-white with just a touch of cyan-blue, both styled in a straight, smooth haircut that curled sharply around at the end. Her eyes were lavender purple in color, just slightly brighter than Twilight's fur, and her cutie mark was a star-tipped wand standing against a crescent moon. She wore a large, bright-purple magican's hair and matching cape, both covered in multiple stars of different colors.

"Watch in awe as the Great and Powerful Trixie performs the most spectacular feats of magic ever witnessed by pony eyes!" Trixie announced in a loud, boastful, and snobbish voice, as fireworks and annoying fanfare filled the air with great explosions and loud music.

'You've gotta *be kidding me...'* Spyro thought to himself. *'First Glida, and now* this*? What's next?'*

"My, my, my...what boasting." Rarity stated with distaste.

"What a *loser*." Venom spat out loud.

Spike scoffed. "Come on, no pony's as magical as Twi-" He noticed Rarity, going wide-eyed."Twi-...Twi-...Oh! *ahem!* Hey, Rarity, I, uh-" He then perked up. "Mustache!" He cried, running off, much to Rarity's confusion.

Spyro turned to Twilight, wanting to ask for her opinion of this pony, only to see her looking like she had seen a ghost. The student of Celestia looked utterly terrified, cowering against Spyro's right side while peeking timidly out from under right wing, huddled underneath it in fear.

What was wrong? Did she know this pony?

"There's nothing wrong with being talented in Equestria, is there?" He asked Rarity and the other girls.

"Nuttin' at all." Applejack assured him. "'cept when someone goes around showin' it off like a school filly with fancy new ribbons."

"Especially if there doing it for no other reason than their own personal glory." Neublar added, agreeing with the farm mare as Trixie proved her 'Greatness' by materializing a bouqet of flowers from thin air.

Spyro rolled his eyes at the pathetic sight of Trixie's magic. He had literally seen Twilight do that in her sleep, during the picnic-party Pinkie Pie held in the park to celebrate Rainbow Dash's adoption of Scootaloo and victory over Venom. During the picnic, Twilight fell asleep and apparently had a dream about or involving flowers, for her horn started glowing and hundreds of flowers magically fell from the skies and appeared on the trees all around them. It wasn't until they woke her up was she able to make them disappear again with a heavy blush; Rainbow Dash and Venom were laughing their heads off, while Neublar, Pinkie Pie, and Fluttershy all went about smelling (or eating, in Pinkie Pie's case) the pretty flowers.

"Just because one has the ability to perform lots of magic does *not* make one better than the rest of us." Rarity stated flatly and to the point; this, for some reason, made Twilight all the more timid, huddling under Spyro's wing.

"Especially when ya got me around being better than the rest of us." Rainbow Dash said proudly, before Applejack shot her a scolding glare. "Eh, I mean...yeah! Uh, magic shmagic. Boooo!" She shouted awkwardly, looking back innocently at Applejack afterwards.

"Actually, that's exactly what it means." Venom disagreed. "But I wouldn't call what *she's* doing *magic*. More like *mistakes*."

He earned a laugh from the crowd.

Trixie, however, had heard their conversation. "Well, well, well, it seems we have some *neeeeeeigh*-sayers in the audience! Who is so *ignorant* as to challenge the magical ability of the Great and Powerful Trixie? Do they not know that they're in the presence of the *Most Magical Unicorn in all of Equestria*?!"

Rarity blew a raspberry. "Just *who* does she think she is?" She asked Spyro, who shrugged in response.

Savagera snorted in disgust. *"This pony is a disgrace to herself and to all of her kind."* The Twilodon told the others. *"Empty claims and false boasting would only get you killed in Prehistoria. She's lucky this world isn't the same."*

Venom's stripes glowed as he took to the skies, slithering up and around Trixie in a menacing manner, his body trailing through the air like a dancer's ribbon in slow motion. It was almost mesmerizing to watch. "So, 'Great and Powerful Trixie'...?" He began slowly, examining her from all angles. "...what makes you think you're better than the rest of us, despite all evidence on the contrary?"

"Excuse me?" Trixie snapped, forgetting her alarm of the snake's appearance. "You dare challenge the power of the Greatest Mare in all of Equestria, *Reptile*?!"

"Oh, please! You don't think anyone here believes that, do you?" Venom laughed. "If you really were the 'Most Magical Unicorn in all of Equestria', you'd have bigger fish to fry, rather than going around in a slapped-together, rickety-wooden wagon from town to town performing fireworks and annoying fanfare for the lowest class in Equestria's social status, ya big *Dork*!"

"Why you-!" Trixie snarled angrily, using her magic to grab the snake by the neck and throw him through the air. He spun through the air while shrieking his high-pitch roar, but Spyro managed to catch him with his magic and set him back down next to Rainbow Dash.

"*Whew!* Thanks, big guy." He told Spyro.

Spyro nodded. "Sure thing." He then turned back to Trixie. "But he's right! What proof do you have that gives you the right to claim that title?!"

Trixie merely scoffed, adjusting her hat. "Why, only the Great and Powerful Trixie has magic strong enough to *vanquish the dreaded Ursa Major!*"

That got Twilight's attention. The Ursa Major? The great bear of the night sky? Legends of that beast go as far back as Celestia herself: according to the story, it used to be the Great Bear constellation, until Luna, as Nightmare Moon, had summoned it down to earth and gave it

physical form and a life of its own, using it as her strongest weapon during the War of the Sun and Moon a thousand years ago. It was as large enough to be a *mountain*, and was more than strong enough to crush Canterlot itself with its bare paws. Tales and stories that say it still lived in the Everfree Forest are heard of to this day, roaming the world only by night while hiding in its cave during the day.

Fanfare and fireworks followed. Her audience gasped at her 'amazement' as she told the 'story' with some rather weak and pathetic magic pictures that resembled neon lights: "When all hope was lost, the ponies of Hoofington had no one to turn to, but the Great and Powerful Trixie stepped in and, with her awesome magic, vanquished the Ursa Major and sent it back to its cave deep within the Everfree Forest!"

"Aw, *sweeeeet*!" Snips and Snails cheered, they being the only two ponies in all of Equestria stupid enough to believe her tale.

"Trixie truly is the most talented, most magical, most awesome unicorn in Ponyville." Snails announced, encouraging her boasting.

"No, in all of Equestria!" Snips added, increasing the encouragement.

Venom groaned, rolling his reptilian eyes. "And thus Bloaty and Dickhead strike again." He muttered to Rainbow Dash, who giggled rather shamelessly at the nicknames.

"How do you know?!" Spike shouted angrily at the two colts. "You didn't see it! And besides, Twi-Mmph! M-mmph!" But he didn't get much out before Twilight, who was still hiding under Spyro's wing, used her magic to zip his mouth shut just like she did during Spyro's first day in PonyVille.

Trixie laughed. "It's true, my enthusiastic little admirers. Trixie is most certainly the best in Ponyville."

There was silence and crickets.

"Don't believe the Great and Powerful Trixie?" She asked confidently, laughing afterwards. "Well then, I hereby challenge you, PonyVillians: anything you can do, I can do better. Any takers? Anyone? Hmm? Or is Trixie destined to be the *greatest equine who has ever lived*!"

Fireworks and fanfare followed again.

Spike unzipped himself and fell to Twilight's hooves in a begging manner. "Ple-e-*ease*! She's *unbearable*! You gotta show her! You just gotta!" He sobbed comically.

"I-I can't go up against Trixie." Twilight whispered to him. "I just can't, not after what happened at-"

"*Twilight Sparkle*!" Trixie suddenly announced, pointing directly at the lavender unicorn. Her face now a sneering glare of dark amusement; Twilight gave a 'eep!' of fright, ducking under Spyro's wing again. "It's been a *long* time! How long has it been since we last met? *Magic Kindergarden*, perhaps?" She asked, causing Twilight to shiver.

"You know her?" Spyro asked, lifting his wing up a bit to see Twilight's face.

Twilight shivered, swallowing nervously. "Y-Yes." She muttered timidly. "S-She was my rival back in...Magic Kindergarden."

Trixie laughed. "Ha! More like you were my Lab Rat, actually!" She stated. "You always were the pathetic one, Twilight Sparkle; you could barely even use basic levitation as it was! At least you had some use in being my personal guinea pig."

"What does she mean by that?" Neublar asked, he and all the others looking her way in confusion, pity, concern, and anger against Trixie.

Twilight shivered in fright, those haunting memories returning to her mind. "She...she always used me as her test subject, always casting spells on me: all kinds of horrible things! She always kept bullying me! It was the most humiliating and horrible year of my life!"

The blue unicorn's smirk then turned into a glare. "And then you had to ruin it all! *I* was the one with the strongest magic in class! *I* was the one who was supposed to become Celestia's personal pupil! That was *my* destiny, not *yours*! But you just *had* to ruin it all and take *my* rightful place by Celestia's side! Well, now you have the chance to prove yourself worthy of the title. How about it, *Twilight*? Is there anything you can do that the Great and Powerful Trixie can't?"

Twilight whimpered, ducking back under Spyro's wing.

"Wait, I know you." Spyro suddenly spoke up, wrapping his wing protectively over Twilight's back. "I know who you are, Great and Powerful Trixie."

"Y-you do?" Trixie asked, sounding surprised. "I-I-I mean...of course you do! Far and wide ponies have heard the tales of the miraculous feats of the Great and Powerful Trixie!" she exclaimed before releasing more firework magic in the air.

Spyro grinned cruelly. "Yes, I know who you are: You're the egomaniac with a tacky hat that planned to dress up in the dragon costume to kidnap Twilight and force her to work as your sensual massage mare." He chuckled.

"HOW DO YOU KNOW OF MY SECRET PLANS?!" Trixie screamed, causing Spyro's eyes to widen and pupils to shrink to comical proportions, as did everyone else's eyes, staring at the mare on stage in a disturbed manner. "I-UH...I M-MEAN...I HAVE NO SUCH INTENTIONS!"

But no one was more shocked than Twilight. *'HOW DOES HE KNOW ABOUT* THAT*?!'* She screamed mentally, staring at the kirin in complete bewilderment.

"Enough of this!" Trixie barked. "Are you going to challenge me or not, Twilight Sparkle?!"

"That's it! I can't stand for no more of this!" Applejack finally broke; she, like the rest of Twilight's friends, were more then a little steamed to hear what this pony did to their friend. Even Venom was angry, his glare showing his anger toward the blue unicorn.

"You show her, AJ!" Spike encouraged.

"Can your magical powers do *this*?"

The next few minutes were spent with the orange farm mare showing off her skills with her lasso, using it with her tail. She spin the hoop of it around herself on the floor of the stage, before making it spin above her perfect in the air. The crowd 'oohed' and 'awed' as she whipped it back and forth, jumping through the hoop multiple times, before lashing it out, grabbing an apple from a nearby tree, and pulling it back into her mouth, eating it.

The crowd cheered.

"Top *that*, missy!" Applejack said proudly, standing in her causal crossed legs position.

But Trixie didn't seemed threatened at all. "Oh ye of little talent. Watch and be amazed at the magic of Trixie!" She said as she used her pink-colored magic to lift her hat off her head, revealing her horn at last.

The rope began to move forward like a snake towards Applejack, who looked at it with big eyes as it swayed in front of her. Spyro noticed the other end of the rope sneaking up on her from behind and was just about to warn her, when it swirled around her legs and bound the together, the front end of the rope taking an apple and stuffing it in her mouth, leaving her unable to say anything as she jumped off the scene with an embarrassed blush as the crowd laughed.

"Once again, the Great and Powerful Trixie prevails." Trixie announced as Applejack hopped off the stage in humiliation.

Neublar snorted in disgust. "Oh, please! Any unicorn with decent levitation can pull *that* off. But what Applejack did: that took *skill*." He stated to Fluttershy, arms folded against his chest.

"There's no need to go struttin' around and showin' off like that." Rainbow Dash challenged, flying up to glare in the mare's face.

"Oh?" Trixie replied, intrigued by the pegasus' comment.

"That's *my* job!" Rainbow Dash said, earning a laugh from Venom.

Launching herself into the air before Trixie even had a chance to say anything, Rainbow gunned straight toward the towns windmill a short distance away, and did a few loops around the rudders. Following that, she headed straight up, punching holes in several clouds on the way up. Then, she stopped dead in front of the sun, casting her shadow on the crowd. She wasn't

finished yet. Next, she went straight back down, back through the holes she had made in the clouds, causing the moisture from the clouds to follow her down. Finally, in her last move, she went back around the windmill several times, while still being followed by the water from the clouds. Then, she zoomed right back to the stage, and braked to a halt. A moment later, she was hit by the moisture that had been following her, causing a rainbow to appear over her head.

"They don't call me 'Rainbow' and 'Dash' for nothin'!"

The crowd cheered, even louder this time.

Spyro was impressed; she certainly did belong with the Wonderbolts.

"When Trixie is through, the only thing they'll call you is *Loser*." Trixie hissed, firing her magic at the rainbow above the pegasus; she used her magic to turn it into a multi-colored tornado, which sucked around Rainbow Dash and spun through the sky in a roller-coaster-like ride. Rainbow Dash screamed all the way, until she eventually came to a stop, the rainbow tornado fading into thin air as the cyan pegasus spun on the ground until slowly coming a stop.

"I think I'm...gonna be sick." Rainbow Dash groaned, her eyes spinning in her head.

"Seems like anypony with a *dash* of good sense would think twice before tussling with the Great Trixie." Trixie stated, her horn lightning up again. To add insult to injury, she summoned a mini thunder cloud above Rainbow Dash, causing a lightning bolt to strike her in the rump.

"YEOW!" Rainbow Dash screamed, her hair standing up on end. Every pony laughed...except for Spyro and the others.

"What we *need* is another unicorn to challenge her!" Spike said to Twilight, nudging her with his elbow. "Someone with some *magic of her own*!"

"Yeah!" Dash said angrily. "A unicorn to show this unicorn who's boss!"

"A real unicorn to unicorn tussle!" Applejack added.

"Somepony to beat her at her own game!" Neublar agreed.

Twilight, who was partially out from under Spyro's wing, didn't like this one bit. She knew she could now trounce Trixie in her sleep, but not only was she nervous of going up against Trixie, she didn't want her friends to think she was sinking to Trixie's level.

"Uh...Well..." She began, but was cut off by Rarity.

"Enough!" Rarity said, stepping forward. "Enough, all of you. I take your hint, but Rarity is above such nonsense. Rainbow Dash may behave like ruffians, but Rarity conducts herself with beauty and grace."

"No offense, but we weren't talking about you." Venom stated flatly.

Trixie smiled cockily. "Ooooh, what's the matter? Afraid you'll get a hair out of place in that *rat's nest* you call a mane?"

Rarity immediately narrowed her gaze; Trixie had crossed a line. "Oh, It. Is. *On*." She growled, walking up onto the stage. "You may think you're tough with all of your so called powers, but there's more to magic than your brutish ways! A unicorn needs to be more than just muscle! A unicorn needs to have style!" Pulling one of the curtains off the stage with her magic, Rarity spun it around her, cutting it, decorating it, and tailoring it perfectly to her in one blast of magic. When she finished, the curtain was replaced with a beautiful dress that was being worn by her, along with a done up mane. "A unicorn is not a unicorn without grace and beauty." Rarity said confidently.

Trixie simply smiled to herself, and started casting another spell. Uh Oh...

"Rarity won't let Trixie get the best of *her*!" Spike said to the ponies around him. "She's strong, she's beautiful, she's-"

A bright flash again filled the stage with light for a second; when it faded, Spyro immediately paled when he saw Rarity, as did every pony watching. The crowd gasped, staring at her in horror; even Twilight and her friends recoiled in disgust, gasping as well.

"QUICK! I NEED A MIRROR! GET ME A MIRROR! What did she do to my hair? *I know she did something terrible to my hair!*" Rarity squealed.

"N-Nothing." Twilight stuttered.

"It's fine!" Rainbow Dash stated.

"It's gorgeous!" Applejack lied.

"It's beautiful!" Neublar claimed, eye twitching.

Spike broke the chain. "It's *green*..." He muttered, earning a glare from the group. "What?"

Rarity gasped in horror, dramatic tears forming in her eyes; her hair now resembled a green grassy mess of a cross between the Swamp Thing and the Bride of Frankenstein, even sporting twigs and a pair of pink antennae, "No!" Rarity cried. "Green hair?! Not green hair! Such an awful, *awful* color!" She scream through her tears as she ran from the stage toward her home, screaming all the way.

"Well, *excuse me*!" Venom yelled sarcastically after her, insulted.

Spyro leaned down to Spike. "Girls like it when you try to make them feel better." He whispered in the baby dragon's ear. Immediately getting the idea, Spike quickly thanked Spyro and ran through the crowd, following Rarity.

Neublar, having enough of seeing this mare make fools of his friends, stepped forward. "You may be able to stand up bravely against your fellow ponies, but let's see what you can do against another species altogether!" He challenged, flexing his limbs and spine, popping the kinks in his joints.

Trixie merely scoffed at the amphibiod. "Oh please! What can a hideous *ape* like yourself do that Trixie can't."

Fluttershy actually frowned at Trixie; how dare she say much means things against someone so nice...

"How about *this*?" He asked, using his frog-like jumping ability to leap out of the crowd, landing down next to the corner of one of the many straw-roofed buildings making up the town. He then spread his arms out and grabbed the sides of the building; the ground began to shake as, with all of his incredible strength, the entire structure was pulled out of the ground with a mighty crashing sound, dirt and stone falling down into a large pit as the entire building was lifted up over the Amphibiod's head.

"Alright, Neublar!" Venom cheered, raising his balled-up tailtip like a fist, most of the crowd cheering with him.

"My House!" Berry Punch screamed.

Neublar grunted as he held the massive weight up sturdily; even with his incredible strength, it was heavy. "Beat this...if you can...Trixie." He growled between breaths.

Trixie was just as surprised as everypony else, but she regained her confidence, smirking evilly. "I guess it's true what they say: the bigger they are, the harder they fall." She then fired her magic at the ground near Neublar's feet; with a flash of her light-pink light, the earth beneath the amphibiod was suddenly frozen in ice, spreading outward under his feet.

"WAH-HA!" Neublar cried as he slipped, throwing the house upwards before crashing down on his back. He barely had time to sit up before the building he had thrown came back down on top of him with a thunderous crash.

"NEUBLAR!" Fluttershy screamed.

"NOOOOOOOOO!" Berry Bunch screamed herself, fainting afterwards; first Hearts and Hooves Day, and now this...

With a pained groan, Neublar pulled himself out from under the rubble; being flattened into a frogape pancake was something he had experienced many times before, but it was never a pleasant situation.

Spyro watched Fluttershy fly over to help her friend before turning back to Trixie with an angry glare. He then spread his massive wings and took to the sky, landing solidly on the left side of the stage.

"That is it! I'll face you in your pathetic challenge!" He growled, his horns and eyes glowing with his magic.

"Oh, *you* again..." Trixie began, but soon was shocked. "Wait! You're a *Kirin* Pony!" She exclaimed in surprise. "But...your kind was wiped out by Nightmare Moon during the War of the Sun and Moon!"

That statement hit Spyro like a blow to the gut, the kirin staring into space in shock. Luna was the reason there were no other kirins in Equestria?! But why?! How?!

He shook off his shock, glaring at the unicorn pony. "I guess I'm just lucky." He stated flatly.

Trixie looked him over. "And an Alicorn Kirin at that..." She muttered to herself, a brief look of worry passing over his face. However, she took an unexpected turn when she overlooked his body, a sultry gaze coming over her face as she approached him. "...Then again..." She began with a wicked smile. "You *are* pretty cute...I'm sure the Great and Powerful Trixie could find *some* use for you." She said walking past him, running a hoof over his wing softly.

Spyro was completely stunned; was she *advancing* on him? That was *not* something he was expecting. He didn't know there were *these* kinds of ponies in this world...still...he had to admit: the offer *was* tempting, even for him; he was a guy, after all...but even if he wanted to do that, Trixie was the last pony in Equestria he would want to do it with.

"I'll pass." He said bluntly.

"Are you sure?" Trixie said, leaning in to whisper in Spyro's ear. "Maybe you can be my sensual massage *stallion*."

"He said he'll pass!" Twilight suddenly shouted, earning a lot of confused looks from the ponies around her. "Not...not that I care, or anything..." She added quickly.

Seeing the adamant look on Spyro's face, Trixie sighed and backed away. "Your loss." She said with a wink. "The Great and Powerful Trixie doesn't just go around offering free pony rides, you know."

"Why?" Venom asked with a smirk. "Do you normally charge for them?"

Glaring at the serpent for a moment, she turned her attention back to Spyro, with a much more serious demeanor. "What do you wish to challenge Trixie too?" She asked him.

"We'll start with a Boasting Match." Spyro answered. "An ancient and traditional ritual of the Storm Giants; if you can make it through that, then you'll be worthy for my next challenge."

Trixie cocked an eyebrow, but accepted the challenge anyway. "Ah, just like the olden days. Very well, Trixie shall go first." Taking a stance, she yelled out her boasts: "I am the Great and Powerful Trixie! I have traveled all over Equestria and I've not found my equal! I've banished an Ursa Major and am the most powerful unicorn in Equestria! And I will win this challenge like I've won all of the others!"

There was a moment's silence.

Then Spyro spoke some disturbingly familiar words.

"You're kidding. You're kidding, right?"

In that one action, Twilight saw a flashback flash before her eyes, the image of Spyro on the stage replaced by the Mare of Darkness herself standing on the throne of the Ancient Castle of the Royal Pony Sisters. The tone of his voice, the speed of his words, even the movement and posture of his body...all were a perfectly identical copy of the response Nightmare Moon had given Twilight that night a year ago. It was almost like seeing Nightmare Moon herself doing it again.

'But how...why...how did he do that?' She asked herself timidly, feeling very small and powerless under all of the confusion and stress.

"Done?" Spyro asked. Trixie nodded. "Very well. My turn."

When he spoke, his voice was completely different than Trixie's: not boasting or haughty, but calm and strong. In a normal speaking tone, not loudly as Trixie had done, he spoke with confidence and with an age and wisdom far beyond his youth; nopony couldn't *not* hear his voice, quiet though it was.

"My name is Spyro, and I am the Purple Dragon of legends. I have traveled throughout all corners the Fantasy Realm and to realms beyond. I have lived and battled for hundred of years and will continue to do so for many more. My name and title is whispered, sung, spoken, hated, loved, cursed, praised, and known throughout all of Skylands. I am the leader of army of powerful warriors of members from many races and powers, and will lead on many more in my name. I've killed millions of enemies and monsters, and saved entire worlds from evil and destruction. I am called 'The Purple Death' by my foes, and 'The Light of Hope' by my allies. I am 'The Guardian of Atlantica', 'The Champion of Warfang', 'The Ally of Beasts', 'The Slayer of Monsters', 'The Dragon of Magic', 'The Wielder of Light', and 'The Defeater of the Dark Master'. I am Spyro, and I am the Purple Dragon!"

With that final word, his body burst into purple flames. Trixie shrieked while jumping backwards in surprise. The flames blazed off his body, revealing him in his true form, standing tall above all of Ponykind, his purple scales glistening in the light of the setting sun. Needless to say, it was an amazing, awe-inspiring sight.

But to Trixie, it was downright terrifying.

"Y-Y-You're are *Dragon*?!" She shrieked in horror. "But...but d-dragons can't use magic or shapeshift into ponies! That's impossible!"

Spyro snorted in amusement. "Says the unicorn who claims to have vanquished the Great Bear Constellation incarnate." He stated flatly, giving her an amused, side-ways glance.

Trixie was still reeling in the fact she was next to a dragon. "And to think I actually wanted to..." She muttered under her breath.

"So, are you ready to take my second challenge?" He asked crossly, turning back to face her head on.

She stepped back in fear. "And what would that be?" She asked cautiously.

"A Magic Duel. See which one of us has the stronger magic." He told her, his twin horns lighting up with his dark blue, fire-like magic.

Trixie was about to agree when Twilight suddenly stepped up onto the stage, standing protectively in front of Spyro. "No. I'll face you." She said boldly. She didn't didn't care if her friends thought she was a show off; Spyro wasn't ready to use his magic for a duel, and she wasn't going to let Trixie make a fool out of her or her friends any longer. "Spyro may be strong, but he's only a student to magic. I'm his teacher."

"*Is* he now?" Trixie said, raising her eyebrow. "I'm impressed, Twilight Sparkle. You actually have an apprentice of your own; not what I would expect, but it's more than I thought you could ever have." She then grinned darkly. "Now, we will have a real battle to see if you really are worthy of the title of Celestia's student!"

Deciding to finish this quickly, Trixie went first, so she could quickly scare her rival off. However, arrogant as she may be, she wasn't foolish; she knew Twilight was stronger now that she was Celestia's student and a teacher herself. So she decided to use one of the strongest spells she knew.

Focusing all of her power into her horn, the ground started to shake. At first, nopony knew what was going on. But it quickly became clear as the entire stage started to float into the air. Levitating the entire stage, Trixie was confident that this spell would scare Twilight off. She had raised the stage a good forty feet off the ground when she finally stopped raising it. Then, switching her focus, she started to only levitate herself, Spyro, and Twilight, dropping the stage back to the ground, and smash to pieces. Luckily, she had dropped it far enough away from the crowd, to ensure that nopony was hurt. Then, slowly bringing the two of them back to the ground, she shifted her focus again and started levitating all the pieces of the broken stage, and organized them on the ground in their appropriate sizes.

The crowd cheered as she finished. Nopony had ever seen THAT kind of magic, and they had a hard time imagining Twilight topping it.

Gasping for air, Trixie took a moment to breathe, and then smirked at Twilight. She may have almost knocked herself out, but she had won. She was sure of it.

"It's okay to run away." Trixie said. "Trixie understands."

Trixie's massive levitation spell HAD been impressive. But Twilight knew she could top it. After thinking for a moment, she came up with the perfect spell to win this. She closed her eyes and focused every ounce of energy she had into her spell. Levitating herself into the air, she closed her eyes for a moment. When she opened them, her purple eyes had been replaced by a solid white light. The crowd watched in awe as a purple aura exploded out of Twilight. Magical bolts of lightning shot out of her in random directions. Each bolt caused a magical change. Trees were turned into flowers, flowers were turned into apples, and apples were turned into cake, only to name a few.

Deciding to get to the main event, Twilight shot a powerful bolt of magic, at the organized pile of rubble Trixie had made, sending it soaring into the air. Then, as each piece of wood fell back to the earth, a bolt shot out of her and hit the piece of wood into place, which started happening at an incredibly fast speed, filling the area with non-stop claps of thunder. At first, nopony knew what she was doing. It just looked like she was zapping each piece of wood individually, making them land next to each other. However, after a few seconds, it became obvious. She was rebuilding the stage. It only took her about a minute to finish her task, and when she did, she lowered herself back to the ground.

Then, just to top everything off, a bolt of energy shot out and turned Trixie into a potted plant.

Closing her eyes again, the purple aura that had surrounded her quickly started to fade. Then, with one last bolt of energy, she turned Trixie back into a pony.

Knowing that she had won, Twilight turned to the crowd, and got just what she had expected:

Silence.

Twilight frowned; they thought she was just like Trixie...

However, she was surprised, when the audience erupted into cheering. Trixie had been nothing compared to Twilight, and the crowd wanted her to be sure of it. The only one who weren't were Snips and Snails, who weren't pleased their new-found idol was bested, and Spyro, who simply nodded to Twilight with a proud smile.

Looking back and forth frantically, Trixie managed to speak "W...Where...Where did you learn that?"

The crowd quickly quieted down to listen to Twilight's explanation.

"Actually..." Twilight said, remembering her entrance exam for the gifted unicorns school back when she was a filly. "...I always just kind of...knew it."

"*What*?!" Trixie shouted. "You've *always* been able to do *that*?!"

"Well, I haven't always had that much focus." Twilight explained, "Princess Celestia has taught me to focus enough to control that spell. But I've always had that power within me; I am the Element of Magic after all."

Trixie's jaw dropped. "You're...the *Element of Magic*?!"

"Oh, did I forget to mention that?" Twilight said, unable to stop the bit of smugness in her voice.

Having been embarrassed enough, Trixie stood up and simply walked away. Keeping her eyes glued to the ground, not wanting to look at anypony. She had never lost before. And it didn't feel good. Since she was still in such a state of shock from being transformed into a plant, she couldn't find any 'last words' to say before she left.

As soon as Trixie was out of sight, the crowd exploded in cheering once again. All of Twilight's remaining friends quickly ran up and joined her on the stage.

"I...I can't believe you did that!" Rainbow Dash said, still in awe of what had happened..

"That'll show her not to mess with Ponyville folk!" Applejack said, smiling.

"Have you *always* been that good with magic?" Neublar asked.

"Well...yeah..." Twilight said modestly.

"Then why didn't you come forward sooner?" Venom asked. "You could've spared us a lot a humiliation back there."

"I didn't want you guys to think that I was showing off..." Twilight explained softly, as if still afraid her fears would come to light. "I saw the way you reacted to her...I didn't want to be like her...especially after all the stuff she did in Magic Kidnergarden."

"Twilight..." Spyro began, placing a wing-claw on her shoulder. "You stood up for us, and you did so with flying colors. We would never think negatively of you for that, especially after all the things you girls have been through. And not just that, but you finally stood up to your old rival and beat her. We're proud of you."

Twilight blushed, smiling softly. "Thank you..." She said honestly. Her smile then turned to confusion. "You were very impressive, too. What was that you did, anyway?"

"A Boasting Match. It's an ancient yet traditional ritual of the Storm Giants, a race of poweful yet friendly and good-natured humaniods that live in Skylands. The Storm Giants' culture was basically a fusion between Greek and Vikings: they're all about strength, pride, battle, wine, and women, but not in bad ways. Boasting Matches are a custom going far back in their history; whenever two storm giant warriors who consider themselves powerful clash, instead of just

breaking out in a big fight, they usually settle it by boasting matches in front of crowds, like Trixie and I just did."

"Storm Giants? Skylands?" Twilight asked, she and the other girls looking confused.

Spyro chuckled. "You'll be able to read about Storm Giants and the history of Skylands and Prehistoria in my book. But I'll explain a bit of it over supper, now that it's too late for lunch." He stated, staring at the setting sun.

'And hopefully many other things.' Twilight thought to herself.

They were about to leave when Spyro and Twilight spotted Spike heading their way, obviously coming back from Carousel Boutique. The baby dragon was walking as if in a daze, a dreamy expression over his face. "Hey Spike!" Spyro called, walking forward to meet him. "How'd it go with Rarity?"

Spike said nothing. He simply stared into space with that dreamy expression.

Upon closer expection, Spyro immediately understood why Spike was so happy: there was lipstick on his forehead. Rarity had kissed him!

"Woah! Spike!" Spyro said with a smile. "What happened?"

Coming out of la-la land, Spike finally turned to the older dragon. "It was great! Just like you said! She was so happy!" He said with a dreamy smile. "But, let me start from the beginning..."

"Girls like it when you try to make them feel better."

Immediately getting the idea, Spike quickly thanked Spyro and ran through the crowd, following Rarity. Unfortunately for Spike, Rarity was much faster than him. She was running on four legs, he was running on only two very short, stumpy legs, and she had a head start to boot.

Luckily, Spike knew exactly where Rarity was going. She wouldn't want anypony seeing her after what Trixie had done to her. So, all he had to do was head to the Carousel Boutique. He just hoped that Rarity wouldn't be too upset when he got there.

After a couple minute trek through town, Spike reached the Boutique; stepping up to the front door of the store, Spike could hear crying coming from the inside.

To be honest, he didn't understand what the big fuss was. Sure, having your hair turned green wasn't the most pleasant thing in the world. But, it certainly didn't seem like the kind of thing to cry so much over. Still, he figured it was just a girl thing that he would never understand.

Taking a deep breath, Spike knocked on the door.

"Go away!" Rarity shouted through the door. "I'm not seeing anypony right now!"

"Rarity, it's Spike! Can I please come in?" He called back. He waited a few minutes for a response, but none came. He knew Rarity was still there, he could still hear her ragged breathing and light sniffling. "I'm coming in, okay?" He said, waiting for a response. When none came, he decided that she hadn't said 'no,' which was good enough for him.

Opening the door, Spike walked into the main section of the Boutique. He was surrounded by mannequins, each one wearing a different design. And on the opposite side of the room, was the counter that Rarity used for purchases. And coming from behind that counter, was the unmistakable sound of whimpering.

Closing the door, Spike ran over to the counter.

"Rarity?" He asked, jumping on top of the counter and looking down at her.

Looking down, He could see that Rarity was sitting on the floor, with her eyes clamped shut, as she tried to stop herself from crying in front of him. She was still dressed in the beautiful blue dress that she had made from the stage curtain. However, no matter how good the dress looked, her hair was still a monstrosity of green mush. He almost gagged at the sight.

"Rarity..." He said again softly. "Are you okay?"

Taking a breath, Rarity tried her best to compose herself. "No, Spike." She said simply, looking up at him, showing the makeup on her face that had started to run because of her tears.

"I know that Trixie changed the color of your hair...But you don't need to be so sad about it!" Spike said, trying to reassure her.

"It's not just my hair Spike..." She said to him, barely keeping herself under control. "I consider myself to be a fashionista! An expert in all things fashion!"

Nodding slowly, Spike pretended to understand where she was going with this.

"But...I lost..." Rarity said, as tears started to fall from her eyes again. "Defeated by the most egotistical pony I've ever had the displeasure of meeting!"

"Trixie didn't beat you though!" The baby dragon said as he jumped down from the counter so he could stand next to her.

Looking up at him, Rarity wasn't sure what he meant. "I- I beg your pardon?"

"Well...you went against her in a battle of beauty..."

"It was nothing so crude, Spike! " The white unicorn told him, acting a little more like herself. "I simply challenged her to show the beauty and grace that she possessed as a unicorn."

"And...did she?"

Pausing for a moment, Rarity started to see where he was coming from. Trixie had only turned her hair green...which had nothing to do with the original challenge. She hadn't beaten her! Spike was right!

"You're right!" She exclaimed, perking up. "The only thing that ruffian could do was turn my hair green! There's no elegance in that!"

"Exactly!" Spike said, happy to be cheering his crush up. "She couldn't beat you at being beautiful, which, let's face it...nopony could ever do!"

Rarity simply smiled as she stood up, as she continued to listen to Spike.

"And if you think about it...your hair isn't so bad!"

"Now Spike, there's no need to lie to me." She said to him seriously. "You may lie to a lady if she asks you if her rump looks big in a dress. But that's it."

"I'm not lying though!" Spike said honestly. "I really like your hair!"

Starting to get annoyed, Rarity started to think he was making fun of her. "It's rude to lie to me, Spike. This is a hideous shade of green. Why do you insist on telling me otherwise?" She asked sternly, glaring slightly at him.

Spike wanted to kick himself. He should have known better than to say that. Now she was angry at him. Him and his big mouth..."I- I said I liked it because...Well...Because we match..." He said sadly, pointing to the green spines on his head.

Rarity didn't know what to say. She immediately regretted how she had just treated him. "Spike..." She murmured quietly. "Do you really mean that? You wouldn't mind if my hair was always this color?"

"Of course not!" Spike said earnestly, "You're always beautiful! No matter what color your mane is!"

Finding herself being overwhelmed by what Spike had said, Rarity couldn't stop herself from leaning in and kissing the baby dragon on the forehead. After a few seconds, she pulled away and looked at the dragon that was now frozen in place, slack jawed.

"Thank you, Spike." Rarity said simply, resisting the urge to kiss him again.

Spike didn't reply. He stood there and smiled.

"Also, Spike..." Rarity said, her voice suddenly heavy with passion. "I'd just like to say that you're the most handsome, sensitive, and muscular dragon I've ever met! And I wish that the colts in this town were half the man that you are!"

"I know." Spike said, his voice suddenly much deeper. "But have no fear, milady, I am all yours."

"Marry me, my brave and noble hero!"

"Of course, let's-"

"*Spike*..." Twilight said in amusement, cutting her number one assistant's romantic fantasy short. "Is that what *really* happened?"

"Okay...Well, all the rest was true!" Spike said, trying to save his honor. All the girls and guys alike were laughing at his expense, all of them (minus Rarity) gathered at the same restraunt Twilight had taken Spyro too before, all of them laughing as they ate their meals; it was already dark out, Luna's stars giving the dark time a feeling of hope and wonder. "She kissed me, then told me that she had to fix her hair, no matter how much I loved it. So, I decided to come back, so nopony would worry about me!"

"Well, you missed one hell of a boasting match and magic duel." Venom stated, munching on his topping-less pizza.

"Venom! Language!" Twilight hissed, covering Spike's ears.

The Emperor Cobra merely rolled his eyes.

"So, were all those fancy things ya said durin' yer boastin' match true?" Applejack asked. "Or did ya just make it all up on the spot?"

"They're all true, but most of them honestly aren't as amazing as they sound." Spyro said honestly. 'The Guardian of Atlantica' was taken from my adventure when my sister and I saved Starina and Skylands from an evil sea witch and...a powerful monster from Prehistoria." His voice dropped at the last words, but he shook if off. "And the title of 'Champion of Warfang' is simply what some people call me."

"'The Ally of Beasts' and 'The leader of army of powerful warriors of members from many races and powers' means he's friends with us!" Neublar said proudly, causing Spyro to smile modestly. "Most of us Skylanders are different kinds of monsters to begin with, and Spyro has a skill with becoming friends with all sorts of dangerous creatures. 'The Slayer of Monsters'? That's kinda self-explainatory."

"'The Dragon of Magic' is your doing, Twilight." Spyro told her. "And 'The Wielder of Light' was based off of a magic sword I once wielded as a human."

Twilight still looked confused. "But, what about 'The Defeater of the Dark Master'?" She then asked.

Spyro cringed, while Neublar, Savagera, and Venom all stared at him with mixed looks. "Actually, I'd rather not talk about that one." He admitted quietly.

The lavender unicorn frowned in concern.

"Speaking of Atlantica, just before Neublar disappeared from the palace, Melody had come home from the Migration." Venom suddenly spoke up, changing the subject; the fact that he used her human/mermaid name meant she was currently in human or mermaid form at the moment. "I fact, I think she told us about this when your parents asked about it: said something about you taking another task from the guardians for a few months and how she was left behind...*again*."

Spyro looked rather guilty. "How was she doing?" He asked softly.

"Well, she was rather glum and depressed when she first arrived; I think it's your whole 'Symbiotic Relationship Seperation' thing again, but at least it wasn't as bad as the *last time that happened*." The Emperor Cobra said with emphasis, bringing back rather bad memories, making the purple dragon sadden even further. "But she was doing better the last time I saw her, before I was sent here; she's been arguing with Sparx non-stop again. That's usually a good sign, right?"

Spyro couldn't help but grin; Melody and Sparx arguments were something that happened on a regular basis in Eric's Palace. The fact that Melody was now the Terror of the Skies had never left Sparx, and he never passed the opportunity to rub it in her face. Melody, in turn, found great pleasure using the pikachu-turned-dragonfly's fear of her to make his life miserable. The most recent and now common insult was the nickname she invented for him: Sparkles. He *hated* the name, stating it made him sound like 'some sort of girly fairy'; he tried to insult her back, causing her 'Deadly Night-Dragon of Dark Seas'...but it turned out Melody actually *liked* it, thus humiliating and crushing the poor dragonfly even further. It had even got so bad at one point he had left the palace for a while and returned to the swamp where his parents now lived since the destruction of Poke-World, in order to see his family again, but mainly to escape his ultimate source of torment.

"You guys actually live with Spyro and his family at their palace?" Rainbow Dash asked.

"Not actually *live* there, but we spend the days there." Neublar told them. "We have our homes in Skylands, but we spend our time mostly at Eric Palace in order to keep an eye on the girl; you wouldn't believe what kind of trouble she gets herself into."

"More like what trouble you three get us into." Savagera, who was the only one not sitting at the table, stated with distaste. *"She is a good Portal Mistress; she just needs to learn self-control, as do you three."*

"Three?" Pinkie Pie asked.

"He's including Harry, who isn't here at the moment." Neublar stated glumly.

"Oh, come on. Don't act like you haven't laughed at the pranks we pull around the palace." Venom chuckled, already laughing at a certain memory; Venom had joined Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash at the whole prank rampage (though Rainbow Dash had to tone it down a bit, now that she had a little sister to be a role model for), and ever since the pranks pulled on PonyVille were far more complex and devious than ever before. The snake was already snickering hard, trying to hold it in. "Like...like...like the time we used your mom's make up to give Grimsby that make-over in his sleep?"

Spyro dropped the fork he was using, squeezing his eyes shut as he chuckled hard through his gritted teeth, though he lost the fight and began laughing. That alone was enough to bring a smile to Twilight's face, who put her hoof over her mouth to keep her own giggles in. Venom was already laughing hard, as was Neublar, and though Savagera didn't laugh he did so signs of amusement, which was pretty good considering who he was. Many of the girls were giggling themselves, if only at the sight of the cackling boys around them.

"Hah...heh...Oh man..." Venom wheezed, wiping a tear away. "That had to be the best one yet!" He said with a huge grin. "And he didn't even know it! So he went about all day with people laughing at him and he didn't even know what was going on, until Melody finally had compassion on him and showed him his reflection, for we had hidden all the mirrors in the palace. His reaction, of course, just made it even funnier."

Twilight and the other girls were all laughing now, especially Rainbow Dash and Pinkie Pie.

Fluttershy, even though she giggled softly herself, looked more concerned than anything. "Don't you think that was a little mean, though?" The creamy pegasus asked softly.

Venom rolled his eyes. "Grow a backbone, will you?" He said in a exasperated tone. Neublar glared at him. "What?"

"At least she was never beaten by a pony in battle." Spyro said with a grin.

The Emperor Cobra cringed. "Oh, you just *had* to bring *that* up!" He muttered. "As if you should talk about girl problems! Remember the time during Melody's birthday party-"

His sentence was cut off when the purple dragon grabbed him tightly by the throat with his tail, making the snake's eyes bugle and his tongue hang limp as he gagged. Spyro glared at him, loosening his hold a bit, though his blush made his purple face turn a deep blue. "I thought we all agreed *never* to speak of that again..." He growled.

"You forced my hand! Uh, I mean, tail!" Venom wheezed.

Twilight looked confused. "What happened during the birthday par-"

"Don't." Spyro said flatly as he released Venom. "Just...Don't."

Twilight was about to say more, when the night and peace was suddenly shattered by a monstrous roar that shook the entire village; everyone at the table jumped and screamed/roared in alarm, ponies around them doing the latter as they ran about like frightened chickens. The ground shook as heavy footfalls crashed through the planet's surface, telling everyone feeling them that something very big was coming.

Then, from behind one of the nearby buildings, rose the very beast Trixie had claimed to vanquish: the dreaded Ursa Major.

It was *enormous*, far bigger than any of the buildings in PonyVille; it had to be well over two hundred feet tall when standing on its hind legs. Its entire body was like that or a great bear, most like a grizzly, with an entire galaxy of stars floating within its semi-transparent body, the largest and brightest stars being the ones that made up the Ursa Major Constellation. It also had a long, cat-like tail, huge saber fangs and claws, fierce gold-and-red eyes, and dark-purple fur.

"HOLY $*%#!" Venom shouted.

The Ursa Major roared out more in anger before swinging down its massive right paw upon one of the normal houses, destroying it in one blow with a massive crash. All the ponies still awake screamed in terror as they stampeded away from the great monster of the night sky. Twilight and Spyro looked at each other before they both galloped/flew to the main square where the beast was currently at. There, they found a terrified Trixie along with Snips and Snails, the two colts looking stupidly calm.

"What's going on?" Twilight demanded.

"We brought an Ursa to town!" Snips said proudly, as if it was a good thing to do.

"You *WHAT*?!" Twilight screamed.

"Don't worry, the Great and Powerful Trixie will vanquish it!" Snails said in a rather loud tone.

Spyro turned his attention to Trixie; the show mare had a look of both fear of the monster before them, and a fear of revealing a secret...until, finally, she gave in.

"I can't..." She finally admitted.

"WHAT?!"

"I can't, I never have. No one can vanquish an Ursa Major. I just made the whole story up to make me look better." Trixie explained in a rushed, panicked tone.

"*Made it up*?!" The two colts shouted in shock.

"Oh, and that's such a big surprise, Bloaty and Dickhead?" Venom asked harshly.

A deep rumbling growl behind them told Spyro that the beast was behind them; he and Twilight (who looked just as terrified as Trixie did) turned around to see the Ursa rise up to full height, glaring down upon PonyVille with animalistic rage in its eyes.

"Twilight, go back to the Library." Spyro told her. "Tell the princess's, and fast! I'll lure the Ursa away from PonyVille."

Twilight looked horrified. "No, Spyro, you can't!" She nearly screamed, wrapping her forehooves around Spyro's arm, trying to hold him back. "It's suicide! That thing will *kill* you!"

"Go."

"But-

"GO!" Spyro nearly shouted. "We need Celestia's help! And you're the only one who can contact her from here! I can give this town a few minutes, but not much." He then softened. "Go on, Twilight. You can do this!"

Twilight stared into his eyes for what seemed like an eternity before she let his arm go. "Okay. But be careful." She told him

Spyro nodded, before spreading his wings and taking to the skies, heading straight for the Ursa. Twilight watched him go before she grabbed Spike with her magic and, setting the baby dragon on her back, galloped toward PonyVille Library as fast as her hooves would take her.

Spyro's wings pounded against the air as he flew across the landscape, heading toward the monster bear as fast as he could go. Once he got within a hundred yards of it, he landed on the ground and, facing the Ursa Major, roared at the top of his lungs; with was a truly terrifying, bellowing roar, like it had the power of a great fire or a lightning bolt, shaking the air around his mouth.

The Ursa Major turned at the sound of the roar, looking down to see a young purple dragon of almost matching color standing bravely before it. The creature stopped dead in its tracks as soon as it spotted him...almost as if something was wrong with the dragon standing in front of it. The lack of movement from the Ursa made Spyro worry. He began hoping that the beast didn't want a fight, but somehow he doubted that was the case. At least this was giving Twilight time to get Celestia for him.

Unfortunately for Spyro, after almost two full minutes staring him down, it got down on all fours and started to approach him cautiously, as if it was afraid of him...though it was clear it was far from that.

"Spike!" Twilight said the second they arrived in the library. "I need you to write a letter to Princess Celestia! We need to get her here!"

"But, Twilight! She'll never get them! She won't even be awake!"

Twilight knew this was the case, but saw no alternative. "Just start sending as many scrolls as you can!" She said desperately. "She's got to notice them eventually!"

"I'll try my best..." Spike muttered, nervous that he had been tasked with something so important. "But, what are *you* gonna do?"

"I just can't sit here while Spyro's fighting that monster out there." The lavender unicorn told him. "I have to go help him! Start sending those letters!" She told him as she ran for the door; however, she stopped to say one more thing. "Spike, if you don't get a response from the Princess in ten minutes, get everypony out of town. They should all be at city hall...please."

Spike simply nodded as he watched her bolt out the door. As soon as she was gone, he got to work.

Spyro bravely yet cautiously stepped toward the Ursa, hoping that he could keep it away from Ponyville; he had faced against many large and powerful monsters in his day, but this one was among the biggest he had ever encountered. Somewhere up with the Kaiju of Monster Island...but Spyro had faced bigger, such as the Destroyer and the Earth Golems of Inner Earth, and he wasn't about to back out now.

Finally the Ursa started to speed up. It almost seemed like it had finally worked up the courage to charge him, roaring angrily as it did so.

Readying a spell with his glowing horns, Spyro waited for the Ursa to get just the right distance. Then, just as the Great Bear got within a hundred feet of him, he cast the most powerful barrier spell he knew: a wall of blue/purple aura erupted into existence between him and the Ursa Major, the latter crashing head long into it, causing it to roar in pain as it crashed backwards with a thunderous earthquake.

Pain spiked through Spyro's head as the spell took the impact; he remembered Twilight mentioning how more powerful spells would continue to draw magical energy from their casters, until the caster stopped the spell themselves, or the caster ran out of energy to support the spell. Being the purple dragon, his energy was more than enough to keep going for weeks on end, but Ursa Major was powerful, and it would only be a while before it would break it down.

Growling loudly, the Ursa righted itself, and slowly walked up to the barrier Spyro had cast. Making a couple of light hits to the shield, the Ursa decided to use brute force to break it down. Spyro watched as the star beast lifted its monstrous paw into the air, preparing to strike his shield. Seeing how much force it was going to put into its strike, he got an idea:

As soon as the Ursa threw its massive arm toward the shield, Spyro cancelled the spell, giving the monster nothing to catch itself on. The momentum made it stumble forward, before tripping over itself and fall to the ground with another earth-shaking crash.

Standing his ground, Spyro watched as the Ursa got back up; its eyes were glaring with pure anger and hate at the purple dragon, a deep growl of equal emotions erupting from its gritted teeth.

It had just gotten personal.

With an angry snarl, the Ursa Major grabbed a nearby tree, ripping the entire thing up from the roots and throwing it at the dragon with all its strength. Focusing on the fast approaching tree, Spyro cast a levitation spell, causing the tree to stop dead in its tracks.

With a sigh of relief, the purple dragon lowered the tree to the ground. However, his relief was short lived, as another tree was already on its way. And unfortunately, he wasn't prepared for this one. As the tree quickly approached him, he inhaled deeply and, his mouth glowing yellow with light and energy, he fired his Electricity Breath, shooting a large, powerful bolt of yellow lightning from his jaws.

The lightning bolt blasted through the tree, shattering it into burning splinters, and continued blazing through the air until it struck the Ursa Major directly in the chest. The Ursa Major roared in pain, stumbling backwards as an unexpectedly powerful blast of electricity was launched by its small but surprisingly powerful foe. Spyro, not missing a cue, summoned the glowing green element of earth into his forepaws slammed them onto the ground hard. From the earth beneath the great bear, a huge pillar of glowing-green rock shot up and struck it painfully in the stomach, sending him tumbling backwards head over heels.

Collapsing down onto his stomach, Spyro gasped for breath. Summoning up a pillar that big took a lot out of him, especially after his both electricity and magic before. He barely had the strength to stand up...and that was far from good.

Groaning at it stood back up, the Ursa glared down to see the strange purple dragon weakened on the ground. Good. He was an easy target now.

It let out another deafening roar before it charged, but it only got halfway to him before another wall of magic formed between the two monsters, but this time a sparkling purple in color and magic.

Spyro lifted his head up to see Twilight with a very angry look on her face; with every step forward that the lavender unicorn took, the Ursa Major was forced a step back, the wall moving with the unicorn. Then, casting another spell, Twilight teleported Spyro and herself behind a bush that was nearby. Hopefully this would confuse the Ursa long enough for her to help the purple dragon.

"Are you okay?" Twilight whispered to the still collapsed Spyro, sounding extremely concerned.

"Y-Yeah..." Spyro groaned quietly as he struggled to stand up. "I just need to catch my breath."

"No." She insisted, pushing her hoof down on his shoulder to make him lay back down. "You don't have the energy to keep this up. You stay here. I'll try to hold it off until the Princess gets here." She told him, praying that Spike had been successful.

Spike threw the scroll into the air, and sent it away in a wisp. But a few seconds of waiting, he still got nothing.

The baby dragon had been sending as many scrolls as he possibly could to Celestia, but had received no response. Both he and Twilight knew that the Princess was a heavy sleeper. He was afraid that she would sleep through it, and find out in the morning, when it was too late.

It had been ten minutes. And Spike knew that he was supposed to leave. But, he couldn't do it. Not yet. There had to be something he could do to help...he wished that Twilight had the elements of harmony with her here in Ponyville. Then they could use those to defeat the Ursa. The others times they had used the Elements, it was against Discord and...and...

That gave Spike an idea.

Writing another letter as quickly as he could, he rolled it up and focused. He was about to try something he had never tried before: he was going to try to send the scroll to somepony else.

Taking a breath in, Spike said a silent prayer, then blew his fire on the scroll, sending it away.

That was all he could do.

Running out the door, he ran toward the town hall. He knew everypony would be gathered there. He had to follow Twilight's instructions, and get them out.

Touching her horn to his forehead, Twilight transferred a small portion of her energy to Spyro, giving him the strength to move around properly.

"Now go." She instructed the dragon. "I'll handle this."

"But-"

Before Spyro was able to say anything, Twilight teleported herself away from the bush, and back to the Ursa Major, that was still looking for them. Seeing the lavender unicorn appear, the bear roared at her and started charging her. Casting the same spell that she had before, she placed the force-field in between them. The Ursa was annoyed at this, and tried it's hardest to push through, but just couldn't do it. Twilight was confident that this spell would hold the beast in place.

Unfortunately, that was her fatal error.

Suddenly, the Ursa Major started pushing harder than it had before. Twilight didn't know where it was getting this strength from, but it was closing the distance between them, crushing the wall she had been using to protect her.

With every inch the Ursa got closer, and Twilight felt herself grow weaker. She tried her best to keep the spell up, but the bear was too strong. She knew she had to stop the spell. So, closing her eyes, she removed the forcefield, and tried to give herself a moment to breathe.

Unfortunately, as soon as the force disappeared, the Ursa charged, something she hadn't expected it to do. Quickly erecting a force-bubble around her, she stopped the bear again, only a few feet away from her.

Knowing that this pony wouldn't be able to simply make this barrier disappear the same way the other one had, the Ursa started to smash on Twilights barrier relentlessly. With each pound, Twilight felt herself grow weaker and weaker. She knew she couldn't keep this up. Her shield was going to fail soon. And then, well...hopefully Spike had gotten everypony away to safety.

Spyro watched helplessly as the Ursa mercilessly attacked Twilight's shield. He hated it whenever he was too weak to fight, having to cower on the sidelines and watch as his friends fight the battle he should be fighting.

With one final roar and swing, the Ursa Major slammed down on Twilight's bubble, shattering it with an explosion. Twilight screamed as the force of the explosion threw her across the field like a rag-doll, tumbling through the grass before sliding to a halt. Her fur was ruffled and dirty, her body trembling as she slowly got up.

A dark shadow loomed over her, and she looked up to see, to her horror, the Ursa Major towering over her. With a deep growl, the great bear lifted its massive paw up, readying to squash the tiny pony like the insect she was!

Twilight curled up in a ball and covered her head with her hooves, whimpering and trembling in terror as she squeezed her eyes shut, awaiting the blow...when Spyro suddenly burst from the bushes, flying up to the Ursa's face-level, wings spread wide as he roared in a voice that would put the Royal Canterlot Voice to utter shame.

"DOWN!"

Silence.

The entire night ambience had died down as his roar faded from existence. No movement. No sound. Nothing. Just perfect stillness and silence.

Then, to Twilight and Spyro's surprise, the Ursa Major backed down, lowering itself to the ground on all four feet and moaning softly in a deep, submissive purr. It was as if it was...*bowing* to the purple dragon in front of it.

"As you wish, Lord of the Night."

Spyro nearly reeled as the powerful telepathic voice drummed through his brain, almost making his head hurt. It was obviously coming from the Ursa Major, but even though Spyro half expected the Ursa to be able to speak in some way, being a beast of magic and all, something about the voice caught him by surprise. It was deep, strong, and filled with bass and power, but it was undoubtedly...

Female.

The Ursa Major was female.

'Is that a common thing of this world?' He asked himself. *'That everybody big, powerful, special, and important are girls here?'*

"Why...why are you doing this?" Spyro asked, keeping a cautious yet demanding tone in his voice. "What provoke you into attacking this village?"

The Ursa lifted her gaze, an angry glare adorning her face. *"I apologize, my Lord. But two ponies from this village threatened my cub!"* She said, softly at first, but her voice rising in anger near the end, a growl accompanying it. *"I did what I had too to insure my cub's survival."*

Spyro grimaced, recalling the ultimate Law of the Forest: never threaten a mother bear's cub. *'Snips and Snails...'* He groaned mentally, rubbing his face with his claws. "First of all, I'm sorry those two fools messed with your child, but they were barely more than insects to your cub and even less to you! I doubt they would pose a threat to even a newborn Ursa." He then frowned in confusion. "Secondly, what do you mean by 'Lord of the Night'? I think you're mistaking me for someone else."

The Ursa Major frowned in confusion. *"What do you mean? You're-"*

"That will be all, Nova-Claw."

Spyro, Twilight, and the Ursa Major (now identified as Nova-Claw) all looked up to the moon just in time to see it flash with a bright explosion of blue/sliver moonlight. When the flash faded, they all opened their eyes to see Princess Luna herself descending from her night sky, the dark-blue alicorn coming to hover next to the purple dragon.

Nova-Claw bowed down once more, even further this time. *"Goddess of the Night! Please forgive my actions, but..."*

"There is no need to beg for forgiveness, my pet." Luna told the great bear in a gentle tone. "You did what you felt was right, and no one can blame one for doing that."

Spyro was shocked. "*PET?!*" He shouted in shock. "The Ursa Major is your *pet*?!"

Ignoring the dragon's outburst, the night princess motioned for the Ursa Major to return to the Everfree Forest. "Go. We will discuss thy problems later, once we have dealt with the village."

The Ursa Major nodded slowly before she turned away and lumbered back to the forest; before entering, though, she stopped to cast a confused look to the purple dragon flying next to Luna, before entering and disappearing into the trees, the thunderous footsteps and shaking treetops being the only sign of her fading presence.

Their was a brief silence as they watched the bear disappear...until Luna suddenly hit Spyro over the head with her hoof.

BONK!

"OW!" Spyro cried, grabbing his now-throbbing head in pain. "What was that for?!"

"What were thou thinking?!" She nearly yelled. "Going up against the Ursa Major alone?! King Solaris, my sister told me you were known to jump into danger without thinking, but that was suicide!"

"I wasn't going to stand by at let that monster kill my friends and destroy their homes and lives!" Spyro said in his defense, standing strong for his friends.

"Does thou realize thou could've been killed?!"

"Of course I did." Spyro said, rubbing his head as the pain faded. "But that never stopped me before."

Luna glared at him in a thinking manner for about half a minute before she sighed in frustration, rubbing her own face with her hoof, dropping the Canterlot Speech. "Why do I get the feeling that this is going to be Discord all over again?" She asked aloud.

"Hey, I didn't ask for your help. I was doing well on my own." He told her. "Come to think of it, I *was* for once..."

Luna herself was genuinely surprised. "Yes, it was very surprising." She admitted. "Normally Nova-Claw doesn't obey anyone but me. So why did she obey you?"

Spyro frowned in thought, recalling what the Ursa Major had called him: Lord of the Night. What did that mean?

"I don't know." He half-lied. "She just obeyed me when..." His eyes widened. "TWILIGHT!" He cried, diving to the earth below, Luna in quick pursuit. The purple dragon touched down faster

than he was intending, stumbling a bit as he ran up to where Twilight was still lying on the ground, looking exhausted and dirty, but unharmed. He pushed his muzzle under the unicorn's body, helping her stand up...

...and was awarded with another hoof to the head.

BONK!

"OW!" He cried again, stumbling backwards.

"You *idiot*!" Twilight screamed at him, her face a mix of anger and terror. "You could've been killed! What w-were you t-thinking?!" Her rage quickly crumbled into broken sobs as she threw herself at the purple dragon, throwing her arms around the base of his nack the best she could. "Y-You could've...coul-l-l...!" She couldn't finish her sentence, trembling against his chest as she sobbed in terror.

Spyro's face softened as he wrapped a protective arm around her shaking body. "It's okay. It's over now." He told her softly.

Luna, however, glared toward the direction of PonyVille. "Not yet, I'm afraid." She told them both.

PonyVille:

The entire village cheered louder than ever before as Spyro and Luna descended down to the main square, the former carrying Twilight on his back. The moment they landed they were surrounded by the entire population of PonyVille, all the ponies cheering for their saviors. The first ponies to greet them were the other five girls. Applejack and Rainbow Dash both gave Spyro more bonks to his already sore head, scolding him for almost getting himself killed before the entire group dog-piled him in a large group hug.

The next were Spike, Neublar, Venom, and Savagera, the first running up to Twilight and hugging her tightly as the other three went to Spyro, each both praising him fpr his victory, and scolding him for being stupid...again.

Luna's eyes widened at the sight of the new monsters in town. "What are these...monstrosities, Twilight Sparkle?!" She asked in shock. "Are they more of those monsters from the EverFree?"

Twilight frowned a bit. "Those 'monstrosities' are Spyro's friends, who are from the same world he is." She told Luna. "They've been popping up all over PonyVille lately."

That comment struck something in Luna's mind, causing her eyes to narrow in deep thought. *'When the leader of the elements are found, the others will arrive...perhaps my sister was right after all...'* She thought to herself. She would have to tell Celestia about this.

"So, did Spyro actually vanquish the Ursa Major?!" Spike asked excitedly.

Twilight frowned at being dropped out again, much to Spyro's amusement. "Well, Twilight and I didn't vanquish the Ursa Major; we both held it back until I managed to stop it. And then Luna came and made it go back to the Everfree Forest." He told the crowd listening; the purple dragon then turned to Luna. "That reminds me: how did you know we were in trouble?"

"I received a letter from Spike requesting my assistance." Luna explained. "I came as soon as I read it."

Twilight smiled proudly at Spike. "Good job, Spike." She told him, hugging him again. "I knew you could do it."

"But why was the Ursa attacking us?" Fluttershy asked.

Spyro glared in the direction of two certain colts. "She wasn't attacking us. She was just upset because *someone was messing with her cub*!"

Everyone in the crowd glared at Snips and Snails, who cowered sheepishly with nervous grins.

"Hah!" A familiar voice spoke up through the crowd; Spyro and Twilight turned to see Trixie approaching them. "You may have calmed the Ursa Major, but you'll never have the amazing, show-stopping ability of the Great and Powerful Trixie! Mark my words, Twilight Sparkle! You have not seen the last of me! Nor have you, Spyro the Dragon!" She said as she reared back 'dramatically'; she then slammed her hooves onto the ground, creating the classic 'disappearing smoke screen', which faded to reveal her running away into the distance.

"Why that little-!" Rainbow Dash growled, taking off into the air.

"Just let her go." Twilight told her, causing the cyan pegasus to brake in thin air. "Maybe one day she'll learn her lesson." Then she turned her attention to Snips and Snails, who were trying to sneak away. "Now...about you two..." She began sternly.

Snips laughed nervously. "Uh, we're sorry that we made the Ursa Major mad." He apologized weakly.

"We just wanted to see some awesome magic!" Snails repiled dumbly.

"Yeah! And the way you and Spyro vanquished that Ursa Major was *awesome*!" Snips cheered, forgetting the situation.

Twilight was about to continue when Princess Luna did it for her.

"*THAT'S *WHAT YOU FOOLS CALL AN APOLOGY?!" She bellowed in the Royal Canterlot Voice, nearly blasting away everyone in hearing range. ***"YOU ENDANGERED THE ENTIRE VILLAGE OF PONYVILLE AND NEARLY GET MY SISTER'S PRIZED STUDENT AND THE PURPLE DRAGON OF WARFANG* KILLED *JUST FOR YOUR* PERSONAL**

ENTERTAINMENT*?! FIRST, YOU SHALL APOLOGIZE TO TWILIGHT AND SPYRO, AND THEN YOU WILL CLEAN UP EVERY BIT OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE URSA'S RAMPAGE, EVEN IF IT TAKES THE REST OF YOUR LIVES TO DO SO! NOW* APOLOGIZE*!"*

"Okay, okay! We're sorry! We're really sorry!" They both screamed in unison before bolting away as if fired from cannons, screaming comically as they went.

"Don't you think that was a little harsh?" Twilight asked.

Luna snorted in disgust. "Those two would never learn if the punishment was easy." She stated flatly before spreading her wings and flying up toward the moon. "Now, I must return to Canterlot to tell my sister of what has happened here. I bid you all farewell."

"See you later, Princess Luna." Twilight said while waving her hoof.

Luna nodded with a smile and began to fly away, when she stopped and turned around. "Ummm, Spyro?" She began softly, fumbling her hooves sheepishly together. "Since I helped you tonight...does that mean we're clear from what happened in-"

"No." Spyro stated flatly.

"I didn't think so." She muttered before flying away again; with another flash of sliver/blue light, the Princess of the Night once again disappeared into her domain.

"For cryin' out loud, ya still haven't let that go?!" Applejack asked Spyro.

Spyro snorted. "Not until I get my battle."

Everypony laughed.

Twilight's Bedroom, Late Night:

'Dear Princess Celestia

I have learned a very valuable lesson about friendship: I was so afraid of being thought of as a showoff, that I was hiding a part of who I am. My friends helped me realize that it's okay to be proud of your talents, and there are times when it's appropriate to show them off, especially when you're standing up for your friends.

Your faithful student

Twilight Sparkle'

"A very good lesson to learn." Spyro told her as he got into bed, laying down as he used his magic to pull his blankets up over his body. Spike was already asleep, so the letter would have to be sent in the morning, when Celestia would be awake anyway. "I guess that means you're finally admitting that you're the most talented unicorn in all of PonyVille?"

"Well... yeah, but it's nothing to brag about." Twilight said modestly as she walked over to Spyro's bed, sitting down human-style on the side of it. She then turned serious. "Spyro, I have to ask: how did you know about Trixie in the dragon costume and wanting to kidnap me? That was all just a dream of mine. How did you see it?" She asked.

Spyro took a moment to remember how. "Well, when I woke up, after being disturbed awake my your dream..." He chuckled, making Twilight blush. "...I saw tiny bits of magic generating from your horn, which just absorbed themselves into my own horns; I guessing that I absorbed your sub-conscious thoughts through those bits of magic."

Twilight looked fascinated, staring at the dragon's horns. "Wow...here, let me try something." She told him.

She closed her eyes as she began generating magic; not using it for any kind of spell or anything, but just generating pure, raw, un-tampered magic. She leaned her glowing horn closer to Spyro's horns...and suddenly, to both of their surprise, the excess magic generating from the lavender unicorn's horn was drawn in and absorbed magically into Spyro's horns, like a magnet of some sort.

The purple dragon looked surprised, staring up cross-eyed at the magic floating toward his head. "I'm not doing that." He told her. "It's just doing that on its own."

"Fascinating!" Twilight 'squee-ed', staring at his horns with sparkling eyes. "Your magic is strong enough to absorb magic from your surroundings!" She told him. "That's something that only Alicorns have been known to do, which explains their incredible power: along with being far more powerful than unicorns, they are also able to absorb arcane energy from existence around them. *That's* how you're able to learn spells so fast. Whenever I use a spell, you involuntarily absorb the essence of the spell into your brain and are able to perform it! That's how you learned basic levitation! From absorbing it from me!"

Spyro frowned a bit. "Which is kinda cheating when you come to think about it." He admitted.

Twilight shrugged. "Cheating or not, this is an amazing breakthrough in the study of magic!" She exclaimed. "I'll have to tell Princess Celestia about this!" She then froze at the mention of her mentor. "Um...Spyro?" She began timidly, her cheeks turning a soft shade of pink. "By seeing my dream...did you-?"

Spyro chuckled, seeing where she was going. "I woke up right when she suggested you two going somewhere private and you helping her out of her armor."

Twilight's face erupted into a full-blown crimson, using her hooves to cover her lower face. "I-I-I don't k-know why I have t-those d-dreams, honest..." She stammered in embarrassment. "I-I don't know w-what brings t-them on."

Spyro chuckled at her face. "You ponies look cute doing everything, you know that?" He asked, causing her to blush even harder. "Don't worry, though. How about tomorrow we try to find out what's going on?" He offered.

Twilight nodded, a grateful smile coming to her mouth. "Thanks, Spyro..." She paused, apparently thinking something over...and then did something Spyro never would have expected:

She leaned in and kissed him softly on the cheek.

The dragon's eyes widened slightly in response. "What...what was that for?" He asked.

Twilight gave a small smile, blushing lightly. "Thank you...for saving my life." She told him softly, giving him a gentle hug before sliding off the bed, trotting up the steps to her own bed on the upper level. She gave him one last smile before sliding into bed herself, pulling the covers over her body.

Spyro laid there in bed, trying to process what happened. He put his clawed hand over the spot where she kissed him, feeling a warm glow filling his body. It was nice...very nice...he then laid down on his bed, practically melting into his pillow, relaxing in the warmth of the glow from the kiss with a smile. What a beautiful way to end the day.

But the day had also brought a few questions to the dragon's mind, which made his smile fade as he laid there, pondering them. One was the destruction of Kirins during Nightmare Moon's reign, something he had forgotten to ask Luna about when she was here. Secondly, their was the matter of the Ursa Major, probably the most powerful beast in all of Equestria, bowing to him like a mere servant and calling him 'Lord of the Night'. What did that mean? Wasn't Luna the ruler of the night? And what was the Ursa Major going to say he was before Luna showed up?

He pushed these thoughts away as he relaxed in bed, closing his eyes in rest. Those questions would have to wait until later; right now, he needed his sleep.

But they would be answered...and soon.

11. Eight Legged Friends

(A/N: WOW! AImost* TWO MONTHS *since my last update! I am* really *sorry about that, everybody! I finally got Skylander: Giants, as well as a game called Garry's Mod, and they have been keeping me super duper busy all month! I'll try not to take so long again! Pinkie Promise! Anyway, enjoy the chapter.)

EPISODE X: EIGHT LEGGED FRIENDS

The Dragon Temple, Skylands, more than 300 years ago:

On an island far from the mainland stood the mighty and ancient Dragon Temple, a respected and famous landmark known well to the city; this temple was the home, fortress, and training arena of the Elemental Guardians, the elemental masters that protected the Dragon Realms from harm. Right now the temple was the only haven left in the world, where the dragons of Warfang had hidden their eggs for protection, but it was only a matter of time before this haven was destroyed along with the rest of the city.

One of the present five guardians was watching the battle in the distance from the balcony, though he was about to step forward and end it soon. His name was Auraka, the Aura Guardian.

Auraka was a strongly-built, young-adult dragon, standing 15 ft in height on all fours and almost 40 ft long from nose to tailtip. He had smooth dark-blue scales covering his body. He had six sets of horns: two long horns growing out back and curving upwards and four smaller horns of the same shape but only a third the size beneath the main horns, framing the top of his head. A long spiky frill ran down his head and ended halfway down his neck, and his tailblade was shaped like a razor-sharp dagger, with two small teeth-like spikes framing the base. His underbelly and wing membrane were of a lighter-blue in color, while his horns, frill, claws, spikes, and tail were black in color. His eyes were a stunning sky-blue in color, with slit pupils.

As far as anyone knew, Auraka was the last of the rare Aura Dragons in existence; They're element was, of course, Aura, the life energy of all living creatures. This granted them special powers most other Dragons would not have, including the power to take on the form of a human being, namely that of the Starukian Race in Lore. To the Starkuians, he was known as Aaron, a noble knight of exceptionally high aura.

The sound of footsteps approaching from behind turned his attention from the battle, and he turned to see a much younger-looking Ignitus approaching, walking with his usual limp to his right foreleg.

"It's horrible isn't it?" Auraka asked his old friend and mentor. "To see the day when one of our own turns on his own races."

Ignitus nodded solemly. "You are not to blame for what has happened here." He turned to Auraka for a brief moment. "He was the one who brought this destruction. You are not responsible for his decision."

"Aren't I?" Auraka murmured angrily, turning away from the window and heading back into the Temple; the two dragons entered a large circular throne room in the center of the temple. It was at least three stories tall and decorated in large banners of different colors that displayed the

five basic elements: Fire, Ice, Lighting, Earth, and Wind. In the room were many different bed-like structures which had crimson colored cushions...and on these cushions laid dozens of different colored eggs the size of footballs. "I was the one who let him trick me and let him back into this world to destroy it. I was so concerned about what would happen to the other worlds I didn't stop to think what would happen to our own...and I also let that she monster trick me into his plan..."

He made his way to one special bed, where sat just one egg: the purple-colored egg of a rare and legendary purple dragon...his son. "I'm the one who brought this upon us...and I'll shall be the one to correct it."

"What do you intend to do?" Ignitus asked with a confused look on his face.

Auraka said nothing as he left his egg's side and made his way to a long chest that laid on the far side of the room. He unclasped the lock with his tail and lifted the lid with his forepaw. Inside laid a magnificent sword, the blade over nine feet long; the handle was carved of a golden metal, with sliver circling up to the gold bird-wing guards, spread out as if in flight. The stainless golden blade was a wondrous work of art, with strange yet seemingly magical runes carved along the base all the way to the tip, the blade itself glowing with a magical light. In the center of the handle was a large white jewel, like a diamond the size of a baseball. The weapon's very appearance spoke 'bold' and 'noble'.

"The Sword of Light." Auraka said aloud. "Forged from the feather of the Sun Pheonix..." There was a moment of silence before the Aura Dragon spoke again."It is the only sword that will stop him."

Ignitus looked aghast.

"You can't be serious!" He exclaimed as Auraka took the sword from it's case and placed it to his tailblade; the weapon magically shifted shape and form to become a Dragon's Tail-Sword, encasing his own tailblade as if it was a piece of armor. "Not even the humans' gods could stand up to that monster in his true form! It is suicide to even think that you can!"

"I have no choice...and you know it." The blue dragon said firmly, the look of unbreakable determination in his sky-blue eyes. "I think I'm meant too."

Ignitus stared at the dragon he considered a brother for what seemed to be an eternity...and then simply nodded. "Very well." He said in a quiet tone. "That you are. May the ancestors watch over you, old friend."

"Promise me one thing, though." Auraka said as he stepped toward the balcony. "Promise me that Spyro shall stay safe. He is our only hope in the future."

Ignitus opened his mouth to answer when the building suddenly shook from an impact force, the loud thud echoing through the halls as well; loose pebbles and other debris began raining down

from the ceiling as the two startled dragons were joined by another guardian: a yellow electricity dragon with sliver horns, wings, and tailblade named Volteer.

"Save them! The dark armies have come!" The yellow dragon cried to the others, struggling to keep his balance.

Ignitus took a moment to look about the room one last time before turning to the purple egg laying on the cushion in front of him. Taking it gently in his claws, he raced out the nearby window and took off into the sky; the war continued around him as he flew as fast as he could to the west, holding the egg closely to his chest, as Aruaka flew out of the same window, but heading straight for the dark clouds covering the sky and horizion, his Sword of Light leaving a trail of glittering light behind him as he disappeared into the clouds.

Ignitus didn't look back as he flew out of the window, heading for the sliver river, a nearby river that ran about a mile from the temple. It was a river that ran through a swamp before reaching the ocean, but that's why he was coming here: it would take the egg far from the dragon realms...and far from the war.

The sky was already growing dark as the sun was setting toward the sea when the Fire Dragon landed in the glade near the riverbank, the sounds of the war just a faint call over the horizon. Ignitus slowly lumbered over to the water's edge as the sounds of frogs and running water filled the air around him, along with many giant mushrooms of multiple sizes growing all around him.

After thinking for a while he, using his dragon's strength, tore the top of one of the nearby mushrooms, one that was just the right size. He set it upside on the water's surface, where it floated in the water like a little boat, and then he set the purple egg in it. It bobbed a bit but stayed afloat.

And then, praying that the egg would be safe, he pushed it out into the river; the current caught the mushroom and carried it downstream, flowing farther and farther from Ignitus's sight.

"May the Ancestor look out for you." He called one last time. "May they look out for us all."

And with that, he took off into the sky and flew back to the temple.

In another world entirely, Poke-World, Kanto, PalletTown Forest, 50 years later:

The sun shone brightly on a warm spring afternoon near the shoreline of the south-eastern edge of the Kanto region, its radiant sunbeams bouncing off the various trees, bushes, flowers and grass that were dotted around the forest surrounding the eastern edge of Pallet Town, giving them a somewhat magical glow. It was here a family of Lighting Mouse Pokémon were gathering Oran and Pecha Berries for lunch...well, most were gathering Berries, minus the youngest member of the family.

Sparx, the little Pichu who was born only about a week ago, was already an excitable and fun-loving rascal who loved to play with his family and dreamed of becoming a strong Pikachu someday. He was the youngest of three siblings, and his older brother and sister were teenagers and had already evolved into Pikachu.

His sister Pika and his brother Zap were helping their Pikachu mother Nina gather the berries while their Raichu father Flash was watching the skies for predatory bird Pokémon.

"Avoid all flying Pokémon. You never know which ones eat Pikachu." His father would always tell his children; he was a calm and level-headed Raichu with a lot of wisdom to share.

"That's right, dear. It's better to be safe than sorry." His mother would agree with her mate. She was always a very sweet and caring Pikachu.

Of course Sparx never really listened; all that he knew in life was to have fun and run about to burn off his seemingless boundless energy. There was just so much to see and do! No time to listen to rules and tips! He had to see the world for himself.

"Pfft...Oran berries? They're not dry enough. Let's pick some Chesto berries instead." He heard his brother suddenly say, the older Pikachu tossing away the berry over his shoulder. He'd always been a very brash and tactless Pikachu, yet had always had a really good heart.

His sister scoffed in annoyance. "No way. We need a more balanced diet than that. I say we get a few Oran berries and a few Persim berries, since their flavors are so well-balanced. Besides, not everyone in the family likes dry berries, remember?" She told him. She'd always been a very calm-minded and logical Pikachu, yet had always had quite the temper on her if provoked.

Sparx, however, ignored his siblings arguing again and began chasing a few fallen leaves blowing through the air. He was fascinated by how they seemed to dance through the air, like fairies in the summer winds. Oh, the joys of childhood innocence and fascination.

He was so fascinated with chasing them he didn't remember to stay close to his parents, and was soon far out of sight.

His chase took him to the shore, which was just down the slope from the Pikachu family's burrow. It was only now that Sparx stopped chasing the leaves, with drifted through the wind toward the outer ocean. A group of Seels and Dewgongs were laying about on the shore near the rocks, where Krabby and Kingler were skittering about from side to side. Wingull and Pelipper were soaring on the breeze, which also brought the waves lapping upon the shoreline.

It was the most amazing seen he had ever seen, his eyes sparkling with awe...but then he saw something else out there, floating on the ocean's surface, and his amazement faded as he squinted in order to see what it was.

It was a egg, big as his mother was, and with a bright-purple shell, floating on the upside-down top of a large mushroom.

Sparx gasped in surprise; he had never seen another egg before, minus the eggshell pieces he came out of, and he didn't have to be a grown-up to know that this one shouldn't be floating about in the ocean. It should be in a nice, warm nest, like his was.

Fortunately, a nice family of Azurill, Marill, and Azumarill that his family knew well was at the beach at the moment, playing about the beach and ocean like most water-types usually do; he ran to them and told them about the egg, and that was all that they needed to know before swimming out to save the unborn Pokémon inside, the parents and oldest siblings grabbing hold of the ends of the mushroom and gently pulling it back to shore, pushing it up onto the beach.

Sparx cocked his head as he studied the egg; he had heard from his mother that this was where baby Pokémon, like himself, came from. Whenever he asked where eggs comes from, she would only giggle and tell him that he would find out when he got older. He hopped up onto the mushroom, putting his paws against the smooth, warm shell.

"Hello? Is anybody inside?" He asked innocently, tapping on the shell three times in curiosity.

Something inside tapped back in the same number.

Sparx blinked in surprise...before smiling in realization. "Hi there, Egg! My name is Sparx, what's yours?" He asked.

"Sparx, eggs don't talk." Aqua, the mother Azurmarill, told him. "Whatever kind of Pokémon that this egg is holding has to hatch first."

"Oh." The Pichu murmured, looking confused.

"Sparx!" The voice of Nina called frantically as she and the rest of the Pikachu family came running down the hill. The Pikachu mother went straight for her Pichu pup, fretting like mad. "Oh Sparx, where have you been?! Are you hurt? Were you attacked? Don't ever run off like that again, do you understand?" She demanded.

"Sorry, Mommy." Sparx told her. "But I found this egg out on the water!"

Flash and Nina gasped in surprise at the purple egg before them; Zap and Pika hopped up onto the mushroom to get a better look at it, while Flash turned to Current, the father Azurmarill, for an explanation. "Sparx here arrived on the beach and shouted to us about this egg, and we carried it here for him." The water-type explained. "We don't know where it came from, but the hatching inside is still alive."

"How on earth could an egg survived floating across the ocean like this?" Pika asked in amazement.

"I'm more concerned about what kind of Pokémon is inside." Zap stated nervously. "It might be some sort of scary Ghost Pokémon, or a predator Pokémon, like a Luxray or Houndoom!"

Pika rolled her eyes. "Houndoom and Luxray don't come in purple, nimrod." She stated flatly.

"Yeah, but Ekans and Muk do!" Zap spat back. "I bet it's an Arbok egg or something!"

"Whatever it is, we need to take care of it." Nina told them; the mother Pikachu had already rolled the egg out onto the sand, sitting down in front of it and hugging it close, using her own body warmth to incubate it.

Everyone there looked surprised. "But Mom, we don't even know what kind of Pokémon it is!" Zap exclaimed.

"He's right, Nina." Flash agreed. "Besides, we already have three pups of our own. I don't think that we can raise another along with them."

"I know, but we can't just leave it here on its own." Nina objected, already growing attached to the living creature inside. "We can at least take care of it until it hatches, and then after it hatches and we find out what kind of Pokémon it is, we can find someone of the same kind to take care of him."

"Yeah, and I can be his big brother until then!" Sparx said happily, still sitting next to his new unborn friend.

Flash sighed; he knew that, once she made a decision, she would stay fast to it...but that was one of the many reasons he fell in love with her. "Okay, okay...you win. We'll take care of it, depending on what kind of Pokémon it is."

"And that we're gonna find out real soon." Current suddenly stated, pointing to the egg, which was beginning to shake; a long crack suddenly split in the side as whatever was inside pushed outwards, ready to enter the world. Zap, Pika, and the Marill triplets Splash, Drip, and Rain all took cover behind a nearby rock, while Sparx and the grown-ups stayed, but a few feet away, giving the hatchling space to hatch.

Suddenly, there was a flash of light blue, like a Lucario's aura, shining from within the eggs and out the cracks forming in the breaking shell. Everyone gasped and jumped back in surprise as the light began pulsing like a heartbeat, the embryo inside seemingly changing into something an entirely different creature.

Then the light faded completely, and the eggshell shattered.

It was a human baby laying amongst the eggshell fragments, appearing to be about six months old, with a soft mess of short black hair on his head. His brown eyes darted about as he observed the world about him in wonder.

The Pokémon nearby were not expecting this.

"It's a human *hatchling." Flash stated, a little surprised. He, like most Pokémon, knew about humans; their forest was right next to a small human farming town called Pallet. He knew that their was good humans as well as bad, like that nice man in the white coat living in that big windmill lab on the hill near them, but it was hard to tell the difference so they avoided humans in general.*

"Humans hatch from eggs?" Zap asked in surprise.

"Of course they hatch from eggs; what creature doesn't? What did you think, that humans just fall from the sky?" Pika asked sarcastically.

Zap grumbled angrily. "Well, excuse me for asking a simple question!" He growled back. "I heard from Aipom that humans give birth to live young or something."

"Now that's just silly!" Rain, a Marill girl, stated in agreement with Pika.

"And downright gross!" Splash, a boy marill similar to the Pikachu male, agreed. Zap just growled again.

"Stop it, children." Nina stated flatly, trotting over to the infant and curling up next to him, using herself as a make-shift pillow; the child stared at her in wonder before a small smile spread across his face, giggling slightly. Nina smiled; humans babies were just like Chibi Mons. Sparx also wanted to meet his new friend, hopping in front of the child and squeaking 'Hiyas!'. The baby froze at first, a little startled, but that soon changed into joyful fascination, his laughter picking up again.

"Well, what do you intend to do now?" Current asked Flash.

"What I said we'd do." The Raichu stated. "We'll take this human to that man that lives on the top of the hill; he's nice and smart. He'll know what to do."

Professor Oak's Lab:

The sun had just started to sink from the sky over the fields of Pallet Town, a small but homely town in the south-west corner of Kanto. It was a small farming town, with less than five hundred people living in it all together, and yet it was famous since it was the home and workplace of the famous Professor Samuel Oak, inventor of the Pokedex, a small, computer-like device that allowed young and old trainers alike to identify the different species of Pokémon, bizarre creatures with unique powers.

Professor Samuel Oak was an elderly but still well-built man with flat grey hair, tan skin, and dark eyes dressed in a red shirt, brown jeans, a white lab coat and brown boots. He was currently sitting at his desk, looking at the trainer records. Every trainer that started his or her Pokémon journey and obtained a license was assigned to a Pokémon researcher or professor

to keep track of their journey and to keep any extra Pokémon the trainer caught, and every time a trainer caught a Pokémon, that Pokémon was shown in their personal record on the computer.

His concentration was disturbed when he heard the front door open, and he looked up to see the familiar face of Delia Ketchum and her Mr. Mime coming in, the latter carrying a basket of muffins and poke-treats.

Delia Ketchum was one of the last living members of the Ketchum family, the founders of Pallet Town and personal friends of Prof. Oak and his parents. She was now a woman in her early thirties and almost six feet tall; she had a head of pretty, mid-length, brown-reddish hair, brown eyes, and fair skin, currently wearing her usual yellow shirt with a pinkish-red coat, a blue, knee-length skirt, and a pair of pink slippers.

Oak was the one who gave Delia her starter Pokémon back when she was just a ten-year-old (and when his hair was still brown!): a Mime Jr, who was now the Mr. Mime accompanying her. She tried out for the Pokémon league when she was younger, but after losing in the earlier rounds she decided that battling wasn't her thing and she and 'Mimey' decided to settle on the usual farmlife of Pallet Town.

"Well, hello there, Mrs. Ketchum!" Prof. Oak greeted in the usual friendly fashion. "What brings you here on this fine day."

"Oh there's no need for formalities, Sam." Delia said cheerfully. "Mimey and I have come to say congratulations for becoming a grandfather! You must be very proud!"

The professor chuckled. "Indeed, I am. You cannot imagine how surprise I felt when my son and daughter-in-law told me that little Gary had become my newest family member." He told her. The two laughed warmly at this. It was only two days since Oak's grandson Gary Oak had been born.

Delia was about to say something else when their was the sound of something small tapping against the glassdoor leading to the outer fields/forest where the Pokémon in the lab lived. "Now what could that be?" Prof. Oak asked, getting up from his chair and heading to the door, with Delia following closely behind. He pushed the sliding door open to see a male Raichu, a female Pikachu, and two younger Pikachu and a Pichu pup standing in front of the door. Prof. Oak recognized the Raichu, who had come here months earlier when his mate was in labor with her eggs.

"Well, hello there, Raichu. What brings you and your clan here?" Delia asked, stepping in front of Prof. Oak and kneeling down to meet their level.

"Rai-ra-raichu, Ra-raichu-ra-i-chu." Flash told her and the professor, and he and the others stepped aside to reveal the baby they had found; the child was nestled in the same mushroom top he had drifted in on, sleeping peacefully.

Prof. Oak and Delia gasped in surprise. "Where did you find this child?" Prof. Oak asked, astonished as the Pokémon were when they first found them. Flash knew humans didn't understand his language, so while speaking he did his best to motion out a crude story of how they found the child; apparently they didn't get the part about him hatching from the egg, not knowing anything odd about it, but it was probably best they didn't.

"So you found the boy floating out on the sea and then brought him here to help him?" The scientist asked. Flash nodded, glad to know that he got the over-all message through.

"The poor dear, floating about on the cold, harsh ocean." Delia said sympathetically; she scooped the child up out of the mushroom and cradled him in her arms as if he was her own baby, wrapping him up in a blanket given to her by Mr. Mime. The child snuggled into her arms, a soft smile coming across his sleeping face, finding warmth and comfort in the woman's arms.

It was at that moment when the small spark of love came to life within Delia heart.

Prof. Oak looked torn between decisions. "Well, I would take him in myself, but I can't raise a child on my own with my business, and my own son has just had his own child...I guess the only thing to do now is take him to an orphanage, but the nearest one is all the way in Vermillion City..."

"I'll take him." Delia told him.

"D-Delia, are you sure about that?" Oak asked after a short pause.

Delia nodded. "It's been very lonely living all by myself since Ashton died." She told Prof. Oak, referring to her husband who died in his services as a Pokémon ranger. "Before he left for that last mission, we were planning to adopt a child of our own. I guess now that I have." She muttered thoughtfully, looking down at the child in her arms. "Besides, Mimey will be here to help me raise him."

Prof. Oak stared at her and her new son for a while, and then simply nodded. "Very well." He stated, and then smiled. "Congratulations for becoming a mother. What are going to name him?"

Sparx had hopped up Delia's leg and was now perched on her shoulder, looking down at his newest friend. Delia smiled fondly at the Pichu before answering. "Ash." She told the professor. "Ash Ketchum."

PonyVille Library, Present Day, Noon:

BUUUURP!

Spyro awoke to the sound of Spike burping up another letter; a common sound in the library, as he had learned soon enough. He opened his right eye, the eye not buried in his pillow, just in

time to see the baby dragon catching a scroll that had materialized from the green wisps of flame...green...

"You've been sneaking in emeralds again, haven't you?" Spyro asked sleepily.

Spike jumped, not expecting the purple dragon to be awake...or to know about the emeralds. "AHH! I...well, uh...I mean..." He stuttered, sweating heavily.

Spyro gave him a half-hearted glare, lifting his head up off his pillows and sliding out of bed, stretching his body in a cat-like fashion. "Green gems discolor your breath, wasting weeks of work!" He scolded his rookie dragon apprentice. "I already told you: only rubies until your fire breath is orange."

"But I'm getting tired of eating no other gems but rubies! They hardly got any flavor!"

"No excuses!" The larger dragon snapped, though in a half-playful tone. "Now, for punishment, drop and give me *fifty*!"

"*FIFTY*?!" Spike cried in horror. "BUT-"

"GET TO IT!"

And with that one baby dragon found himself gasping for breath at only five. "Six...S-Seven...E-Eight..." He counted through gasps. Spyro nodded with satisfaction before leaving Spike where he was, making his way up the steps to Twilight's bed...only to find it empty.

"Hey, Spike, where's Twilight?" He called down.

Spike stopped the push-ups, taking a moment to catch his breath. "She's downstairs, working on something about her dreams, whatever that means." He told him. "She told me to let you sleep; didn't want to disturb you after what happened yesterday.

Spyro's eyes widened in surprise. "Wait, what time is it?" He asked, looking about for a clock.

"Almost one." Spike stated.

"WHAT?!" Spyro roared in shock, leaping down from the upper level and landing next to spike with a thud, startling the baby dragon. Ignoring him, Spyro took the rolled-up scroll with his jaws before quickly bounding out the door and down the flight of steps to the main library room, where Twilight was sitting at the desk with a number of books stacked nearby.

Hearing him come down, the lavender unicorn looked up from her book, grinning at the sight of her 'apprentice'. "Hi, Spyro! Glad to see you up."

"Why didn't you wake me up sooner?" Spyro asked. "It's almost one for crying out loud, and I could've helped."

Twilight's grin faded into a look of concern. "You had gotten into a fight with one of Equestria's most powerful creatures; you needed the rest." She told him before going back to her book. "It's the least you deserve for what you've done for us."

The purple dragon sighed. "Fine, fine..." He muttered, yawning one last time before heading to the kitchen. "But I need breakfast."

"Pancakes and scrambled eggs on the stove." Twilight called after him, not even looking up from her book.

When Spyro returned with his breakfast and a large mug of chocolate milk, he took his place across the center desk from Twilight, munching away on his food as the unicorn continued to find the reason of her crazy dreams.

An hour later:

"Ah Ha!" She finally announced.

Spyro looked up from his Daring Do book. "Found the answer?" He asked.

"I have! You see, since I idolize Princess Celestia as my strong mentor, my subconscious replaces the heroic male part in my dreams with her. And due to the fact that I am currently in no romantic relationship, my head turns current events into these rather cheap romantic dreams..." Twilight explained happily. She then flipped some pages. "And the scientific and professional term for the cure is: getting myself nailed!"

Spyro scoffed out-loud. "Pah! Ain't that the cure for everything nowadays..." He stated sarcastically, taking a swig of his mug.

Twilight nodded. "I know. I mean, *again*?"

The next thing she experienced was Spyro's chocolate milk being spewed into her face.

"WHAT?!" The dragon shouted in pure shock when he finally could, coughing the breakfast beverage out of his mouth. "*AGAIN*?!"

Twilight stared at him with narrowed eyes, her lavender fur now dripping-soaked and a dark chocolate-brown; she calmly used her magic to remove the liquid from body, cleanse it of loose fur, and place it back into Spyro's cup. "Well, yes." She stated afterwards. "I mean, I'm wasting a fortune on horseshoes here and *nothing* works!"

Spyro groaned again, preparing himself for the on-coming migraine. "Oui...I've said it before, I'll say it again: you ponies are *CRAZY*!" He shrieked, rubbing at his temples; that had become a regular habit for him now.

"What? What did I do?" Twilight asked in confusion.

"You don't know what that saying means, do you?"

"It means getting horseshoes...?"

The purple dragon sighed, massaging the bridge of his snout. "We need to have a *long* talk." He muttered under his breath.

It was then, as Twilight looked away with an annoyed glance, did she spot the scroll from the princess. "A letter from the princess!" She exclaimed. "When did that arrive?"

"About an hour ago, when Spike woke me up with it." Spyro stated non-chalantly.

"SPYRO!" Twilight cried, quickly unfurling the letter. "What if it's something important I have to do right away! Oh, please don't let it be a test! Please, please, plea-...hold on a sec." She stated, focusing on the letter. "It's not from Celestia; it's from *Luna*..."

'Dear Twilight Sparkle,

Thou may or may not be aware that tonight is the celebration of my birth, or my 'birthday' as my sister says it's called these days. Under my request, you and all of the Elements of Harmony wielders are cordially invited. The celebration is going to be held in the Canterlot Ballroom at 6:00 sharp, and I wish that Spyro and his monster friends also attend, if they can. I do hope thou can all attend.

Yours Truly,

Princess Luna, Co-Ruler of Equestria'

"A royal birthday party, huh?" Spyro asked in interest. "Nothing new in my life, but sounds like a lot of fun. I'll g-"

He was tackled by a panicky lavender blob of unicorn.

"What time is it?!" Twilight shrieked, her freaking-out face only inches from his snout.

"Uh...Three-ish?" Spyro answered awkwardly.

"AAAAHH!" The lavender unicorn shrieked, zooming off Spyro and flying about the library. "WE GOT LESS THAN THREE HOURS TO GET READY AND GET TO CANTERLOT ON TIME! SPYRO, TELL ALL OUR OTHER FRIENDS WHILE I'LL..."

Spyro sighed as he got back up; and he was looking forward to a quiet day...

Carousel Boutique, an hour later:

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU AREN'T WEARING ANYTHING TO THE PARTY?! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT I CRIME THAT WOULD BE?!" Rarity's voice shrieked in horror. The very idea of not doing such for this important of an occasion. The purple dragon rolled his eyes at the yells coming in through the dressing room door, ignoring it afterwards as he worked to get his suit of draconic battle armor on. That much he could do for the occasion.

"We're prehistorian monsters, not up-class royal snobs!" Venom's voice snapped back irritably, gettting very annoyed with the white unicorn. "The closest thing we've ever worn to clothing was battle armor, and my Captain Green Beard pirate disguise. Besides, it's only a birthday party. What's the big deal?"

"WHAT'S THE *BIG DEAL*?!" Rarity exclaimed, appalled by the snake's utter disregard for the situation. "This is the birthday celebration of *Princess Luna* herself! The least you can do is look presentable!"

"And that's exactly what I'm doing!" The Emperor Cobra snapped back. "I am now currently the most 'presentable'..." He voice was dripping with mocking sarcasm. "...my species can look. It you prissy old hags don't like it, you can go screw yourselves!"

"HOW *DARE* YOU SPEAK TO ME THAT WAY!"

"I dared, and I did, so NYAH-NYAH-NY-NYAH-NYAAAH!"

Spyro groaned, rubbing his temples with his wing claws. Rarity had been fussing about everyone, especially Venom, ever since Spike had received the letter that announced the celebration of Princess Luna's Birthday Celebration, which was to be held at Canterlot Castle that very night. It was going to be an extra-special occasion this time around, for not only did it celebrate the Princess of the Night's birth, but also the one-year anniversary of her return from the darkness of Nightmare Moon.

The rest of the day had been chaos worthy of Discord; Twilight had been freaking out in worry and fret, as usual, but even she was nothing compared to Rarity. She was completely tearing her sanity apart, desperate to make sure everyone was completely presentable for this special occasion. She was frantic to find an outfit for her and the girls to wear, until Spyro merely suggested that the girls wear their Gala dresses and for Spike to wear that little tuxedo of his; at first, Rarity was appalled by this for some sort of fashion reason, but the rest of the girls agreed and eventually Rarity succumbed as well.

Then came Spyro and the other monsters. Spyro agreed to wear his battle armor, as was traditional for dragons to do on special occasions; Rarity, at first, was slightly unnerved by this, but agreed eventually, saying it was better than nothing. Neublar was willing to dress up, but they couldn't find anything for his size or species. Savagera wouldn't do it, saying his species was already as noble and royal as they came, and therefore didn't need to dress up. Venom, however, flat-out refused, Point Blank, and he and Rarity had been arguing about it ever since.

Just as Spyro was making sure his helm was on straight, there was a knock on the door. "Yes?" He called, not looking away from the mirror.

He heard it open. "We're all ready to get going, Spyro. Are you set?" Twilight's voice asked.

"Yes, let me just..." He dusted off his helm once last time before nodding, turning around to meet his magic mentor. "Yes, I'm ready to-" His voice died off as he beheld Twilight in her gown.

This was the first time he'd seen Twilight in her dress, leaving him completely at a loss for words. The main flowing body/skirt of her gown was a midnight blue, decorated with bright white and aqua blue stars at the hem that twinkled in the night. The saddle that held the dress in place was also decorated in the same way, as were the ice-blue shoes that she wore on her hooves. Another of these stars was a part of a hairpin being worn behind her ear, shining as brightly as her radiant purple eyes. The whole image made it seem as if she had fallen down from the night sky, a pony from the heavens; come to grace Equestria with her enchanting presence.

Twilight blushed softly, making the scene both more beautiful and kinda adorable; she then turned on the spot and looked shyly at him. "So, how do I look?" She asked.

Spyro beheld the enchanting image for a moment before he merely smiled warmly. "Beautiful." He told her, warmly and truly. "Also kinda adorable." He then added with a fond chuckle.

Twilight's blush increased, but she smiled all the same. "Thanks. And I like your suit. Is that your battle armor worn for special occasions?"

"As is dragon tradition and cluture, yes." Spyro said. His helm, chestplate, backplate, nack and tail segments, and all four leg-guards were all a matching pitch-black in color, also sporting bronze runes and rims; the black metal shone like a gem, polished to perfection, as did the orange gem on the chest plate. The helm was designed so that his horns and frill fit through it perfectly, and all of the armor pieces were styled to resemble sharpened whisps of flame flowing across the dragon's body. Needless to say, it was an impressive sight.

Rarity, who was also dressed in her ball gown, as were all the girls, overlooked the dragon's outfit as he and Twilight left the dressing room. "Well, it's not what I would recommend, but I must admit you do look very dashing." She complimented with a flutter of the eyelashes.

"Awwww, why can't *I* have cool armor like that?" Spike, whose tuxedo suddenly seemed very prissy and pathetic, whined.

Twilight giggled. "Well, once you become a big teenage dragon like Spyro, maybe you will one day." She assured him.

Venom, who was in serpent form, snorted. "I doubt it, considering that war, and therefore armor and weapons, are not common in this world." He stated flatly, earning a glare from Twilight, which he flat-out ignored. "Well, except for the guards at Princess *Molestia's* Palace." He seemed to be especially bitter about the whole princess thing.

"It's Princess *Celestia* to you, Venom!" Twilight snapped angrily at him for probably the thousandth time since the snake's arrival. "The princess very well capable of sending you to the moon or even the sun if she wanted too. So you better show respect; you're in pretty deep already thanks to that stunt you pulled in Cloudsdale."

Venom snorted, shifting his coils as he turned away with an angry glare.

"Guys, stop." Neublar interrupted before the argument got any worse; the Amphibiod was currently wearing a white collar and a little red bowtie around his neck. Not exactly a formal outfit, but it was endearing all the same. "We're going to a birthday celebration for a friend tonight; let's not ruin it for her."

"Neublar's right." Applejack stated, adjusting her hat. "We're doin' this fer Princess Luna, who probably hasn't had a party in over a thousand years. Let's not ruin it fer her by arugin'."

Venom sighed. "Fine..." He hissed under his breath. "...only because if I do ruin it, Dash is gonna hand me my tail again."

"You bet I will!" Rainbow Dash said with a giggle.

Twilight was already breathing heavily, trying to collect her nerves. Spyro could even see little beads of sweat forming on her forehead. "Are you okay, Twilight?" He asked in concern, causing her to jump. "You seem a little nervous...and jumpy for that matter."

"Sorry." She apologized with a sigh. "I'm just...really nervous. I mean, this celebration is, as Applejack said, the only party Luna has had in over a thousand years, and I really don't want it to wind up like the Grand Galloping Gala did."

Spyro smiled fondly. "Come on, now. I'm sure it'll go fine. Besides, I don't think Luna would mind if we weren't completely formal and uptight about it."

Pinkie Pie suddenly popped up next to them. "Yeah! I mean, with Mr. and Mrs. Cake being the head of all the food, what could *possibly* go wrong?"

Canterlot Palace, Royal Kitchen:

"Sugar! Somepony bring me the sugar!"

"No! It's four cups of flour, not four cups of yeast!"

"Check the oven! I smell something burning!"

"Get that pegasus away from the muffins!"

The Royal Canterlot Kitchen in Celestia's Palace made PonyVille seem as calm as a graveyard. Despite the enormous size of the royal kitchen, the dozens of chefs nearly crashed into one another as they rushed about, assistants carrying ingredients and cooking untensils to the masters (including Carrot Cake and Cupe Cake, who were the head chefs), who were preparing meals almost too fast to keep track of. Should there be a crash, Solaris knows what the results would be.

The dishes already prepared were of such heavenly appearance and aroma it would make anypony dehydrate from a watering mouth; already a feast worthy of the princesses was laid out for the servants to bring out into the Canterlot Ballroom, where the celebration was being held, along with treats like cookies, pies, cupcakes, and other paistries for the party guests to munch on. And standing above it all was the grand finale: a 12-foot-tall, 8-foot-wide, 4-layered, chocolate birthday cake. It was decorated with dark-blue and black icing, styled to themed the night that the birthday filly was ruler over, and had 20 candles adorning the top layer: that was all they could put up. The princess's true age would've brought too many candles for any cake, even that one, to support or to keep the building from going up in flames.

That, and it would be insulting to announce her true age in public.

But a certain intruder in the kitchen couldn't care less about the princess's age or the number of candles on that delicious, mouth-watering, sky-high, heavenly piece of bakery...an intruder who was not a certain pegasus.

Harry quickly dove out from under the counter, skittering quickly underneath the table across the pathway before anypony saw him. He flexed his fanged manibles quietly as he watched out from under the table with all ten-thousand of his eyes, watching with both curiousity and interest at what was going on.

He had no idea how he got here...not that he had given any thought about it; he was a young and simple-minded creature, and if there was no real danger than wouldn't panic.

He simply woke up in a different place than he fell asleep. There was no danger, so there was nothing wrong with that, right?

Especially if this strange place wasn't threatening.

He cooed quietly as he watched the strange, colorful creatures run about carrying trays of food. They looked like horses, though they were kinda small, and the girls had almost human faces. Not to mention they wore clothes, could talk, and were cooking. Also, some of them had horns growing out of their foreheads.

They were pretty to look that, but his true focus was on what they were making.

'It's looks like a party's going on.' He thought to himself. *'I like parties! And they've got food! Am I invited? Maybe I should ask...'*

He slipped out from under the table and skittered up to the blue, slightly chubby mare with the hair that resembled pink icing. He gently tugged on her tail with one of his legs. "Excuse me..." He began, his voice a high-pitched, cooing purr. "...and I invited to this big party of yours?"

If he was a little quicker of mind, he should've seen her reaction coming.

"SPIDER!" She screamed in terror as she looked down at him, the platter of black, dark-blue-icing cupcakes see was carrying flying through the air and splattering all over the floor. "GIANT HAIRY SPIDER!"

"For *me*?" Harry asked, pointing to the mess of cupcakes on the floor, oblivious to all the screams now ringing throughout the room. "Thank you!" He called back as he skittered over to the squished mess of cupcake crumbs and frosting, using his small grabbing legs near his head to stuff entire blobs of the sweet mush into his mouth, eating nosily away with a cheerful look on his face.

Until one of the stallion chefs used his magic to grab the broom and 'sweep' him away, whacking him away.

"SHOO! SHOO! GET, YOU HIDEOUS CREATURE!" He cried 'bravely', though it sounded like he was screaming, whacking the Tarantully with the broom head.

BONK!

"OW!" Harry cried, grabbing as the bump on his head with his stumpy claws. "What was *that* for?!" He squealed in pain.

"BACK! BACK I SAY!" The unicorn screamed, whacking the spider again on the head.

Harry rubbed his head again, an insectal snarl coming from his cackling fangs as he glared at the pony before him. Normally he was a peaceful, even friendly spider, but when provoked even the gentlest of creatures into savagery. Hissing angrily, he took a spider's defensive stance, his first four legs rising threateningly in the air as he snarled, fangs bared. The ponies nearest to him backed up into the others behind them, all of them recoiling in horror at the unnaturally monstrous arachnid before them.

The Tarantully landed back down on all eight, faced his foes, reared his 'spine' back to ready a pounce...

And bolted for the door.

"IT'S GETTING AWAY! GUARDS, AFTER IT!"

"WHERE'S A WATER SPOUT WHEN YOU NEED ONE?!" Harry screamed as he zoomed down the hall, chased by at least thirty guards. He spotted a vent opening. "MAKE DUE WITH THE

VENTS!" He told himself as he dove at the opening, promptly (and impossibly) squeezing his fat body between the bars and disappearing up it, leaving the guards to swear under their breaths.

Canterlot, early night:

"I know I reach really low and pathetic levels..." Venom snarled as he slithered up the steps of the Canterlot Ballroom Entrance. "...but pulling a chariot like some sort of pack animal is, *by far*, the most demoting thing I've ever done! And for *equines*, no less!"

"Calm down, Venom." Spyro chuckled, turning afterwards to Twilight and the other girls. "It's the least you could do for these beautiful young ladies." He said in a charming way, earning blushes and/or flattered looks from the six mares.

Twilight giggled, blushing slightly. "Are you *always* this smooth with girls, or is it just for the mood?" She asked with an amused look.

Spyro rolled his eyes. "Yeah, it's for the mood." He stated with a chuckle. "Living with a royal family helps you learn these things."

They had reached Canterlot as the stars lit up the sky, though most were drowned out from the lights of the celebration. Somehow, the royal city looked even more majestic at night, sparkling like a diamond from the bright lights that shone against the white stone. Spyro and the other monsters pulled the same carriage the girls had used for the gala, joining dozens of carriages each bearing their own guests. It look very much like the night of the gala all over again.

The ballroom itself was just as Spyro expected: large, shiny, beautiful, and full of the upper-class ponies. The room itself was big enough to fit more than *ten* full grown , and was decorated with the usual Canterlot flair; this time, though, all the banners, ribbons, and decorations were all in dark shades of blue, black, and sliver, all themed to reflect the night and the princess who ruled it.

"Oh this is so exciting!" Pinkie Pie squealed, twitching with excitement. "When are we gonna sing happy birthday?! Is she gonna blow out her candles?! WHERE IS THE CAKE?!"

Twilght put a hoof on the chattering pony's head, keeping her from vibrating so violently. "Calm down, Pinkie. They'll announce the time when it's time for cake. For now, just enjoy the party...oh, and please-" She suddenly added. "-try not to crash it again. Okay?"

"Okey dokey lokey!" Pinkie Pie said cheerfully, zooming away to get lost in the party.

"In other words, we're screwed." Venom muttered.

"Ahh, so there you all are." A familiar fond voice suddenly spoke up. Spyro turned to see the Princess of the Sun herself approaching them, looking as benevolent and godly as ever. "I'm glad you could all make it."

"Hi, princess. You look very nice this evening." Spyro greeted her; not as if he was greeting a royal or goddess, not even bowing, but if he was greeting a good friend.

Twilight looked nervous at his causal approach, but Celestia smiled warmly at him. "Thank you, Spyro. You look very dashing yourself." She told them. "I believe that's crystalian battle armor forged in Warfang, if I'm correct."

Spyro grinned. "Yeah, it is. Good guess."

Celestia smiled proudly for a moment before turning her attention to the three monsters standing a bit away from her. Savagera seemed indifferent about her, though he squinted his night-accustomed eyes against the sunlight-like radiance of the Sun Princess. Neublar stared at her in complete and utter awe, as if he was beholding the most amazing thing in his life. Venom, however, was glaring at her in sheer hatred and bitterness, as if she was something he absolutely despised.

"And these must be your friends from Skylands." She said with fondness. "Luna told me about them the other day after..." She grimaced slightly. "...the attack with the Ursa Major."

Spyro nodded, looking back at his friends. "Yep. These are Savagera, Neublar, and Venom." He introduced each one in order.

Savagera nodded his usual respectful greeting. *"Greetings, Lady of the Day. It is an honor to meet you on this night."* He told her, his head and body lowered in a slight bow.

Celestia nodded back. "My welcomes to you, Creature of the Night." She replied in the same manner. "I-"

"I grovel at your feet, your Majesty!" Neublar suddenly announced as he dropped to his knees and threw himself bow in an over-exaggerated bow, shaking the floor as he did so. "Surely there is no one in all of Equestria worthy of your presence, most beautiful and wise ruler of ponies!"

"Ummm..." Celestia began awkwardly.

Spyro merely rolled his eyes while shaking his head slightly.

"Oh, get off the floor, ya *kiss-ass*!" Venom snarled angrily.

The white alicorn glared down at the snake with a displeased frown, as did Spyro and Twilight. "Ah, yes. *Venom*. The one responsible for the attack on Cloudsdale." the princess said sternly, her voice still gentle, but still authorative.

Venom snarled back angrily, matching her glare with his own as he bared his fangs, his coils tightening at his frill spread threateningly.

Celestia's glare softened a touch. "You don't have to get aggressive; you've been pardoned." She assured him. "Twilight informed me that your actions were countered by Rainbow Dash, and that no true harm was done...other than sewage rain over of most of Equestria and almost killing one of the Elements or Harmony. Consider yourself lucky."

"Oh, so I have your 'pardon' and now have a clear conscience. Fan-F***ing-tastic." The serpent snarled with the most venomous, hate-filled voice Twilight had ever heard. "Keep your pardon and anything else you might 'bestow' on me. Don't want it or need it."

"Venom!" Spyro spat angrily.

"Save it." Venom stated bitterly. "I be nowhere if anyone needs me." And with that the snake retracted his frill, lowered his head to the ground, and slithered away into the crowd. He disappeared amongst all the legs and dresses, but they could see ponies shrieking and jumping away in a pattern that led toward the buffet table.

Twilight quickly turned to Princess Celestia, fretting like mad. "I'm really *really* sorry, Princess! I had no idea he-"

"It's alright, Twilight." Celestia assured her, staring after the snake with a look of concerned thought. "I can take a few insults." She turned back to them, smiling. "Besides, we have a party to celebrate." She motioned with her wing. "Shall we, my students?"

Spyro nodded, extending an arm to Twilight. "Shall we?" He asked in the same manner.

The lavender unicorn giggled, wrapping an arm around his (well, more like her holding her entire lower arm around his elbow), following the while alicorn together.

"They make a cute couple, don't you think?" Pinkie Pie asked Rarity with a 'squee', to which Rarity eyed her oddly.

Applejack glared at the direction Venom went. "Now, if that wasn't the most *disr'spectful*..." She exclaimed. "What in *tarnation* was eatin' *him*?"

Rainbow Dash shrugged. "I don't know." She stated, looking surprisingly concerned. "He's been acting like that ever since we got the letter."

Rarity cocked an eyebrow. "Funny. You don't seem that upset about his attitude toward the princess." She stated. "Knowing you, I would think you'd be screaming at him right about now."

Rainbow Dash blinked. "Yeah...I would be..." She stated. "But I'm also kinda worried about him. Maybe something's bothering him."

"Well, whatever it is, he better git over it, 'cause we've gotta party to attend to fer Luna's sake, and we don't need an angry rattler in a sleepin' bag ruinin' it." Applejack told her. "Maybe ya should talk to 'im; he usually listens to ya."

The cyan pegasus hummed in thought, scratching her head with a hoof.

Princess Luna's Personal Quarters:

The only sound Luna could hear was the very faint sound of the brush running through her mist-like mane; other than that, it was perfectly silent. It was something she had grown very used to and she preferred; being imprisoned in complete stillness and solitude for a thousand years on the moon had that effect on ponies.

Like the rest of the castle currently was, Luna's personal room was decorated in a nighttime theme, with dark blues and purples accented by moons and stars. A perfectly circular bed sat in the center of the room. It was easily large enough to fit her comfortably, and it rested beneath an intricate fresco of the moon on the ceiling. There was a fireplace, a vanity mirror, a set of dressers, a few tables, a bookcase, a door to a small exterior balcony, and a writing desk. It was everything somepony would need to enjoy a quiet night in their bedroom, fit for the royal blood she was.

Still, it did little to improve her mood. Despite the reasons to be thrilled, she just couldn't find it in herself to even smile.

It had been over a thousand years since the last time she had experienced a celebration at all, especially one in her honor. It would be the time the ponies of Equestria would finally come to know and love the princess, as Luna had long them to do for so long...but that was probably the reason she wasn't sure she deserved this.

The last time they had celebrated her was the day she...well...turned.

A knock at the door cut off her train of dark thought. "Enter!" She called.

The door opened and in entered one of her own royal guards. As Luna was to Celestia, Luna's guards were to Celestia's guards: different as day and night. Their fur was dark grey, but instead of a mane and tail, they had a fin-like crest and tail, like bat wings, with said bat wings on their shoulders instead of bird wings. Their armor was a very dark blue, almost black, while their eyes were reptilian in nature, golden in color.

"Your sister is asking for your presence, your highness." The guard told her, his voice a hissing whisper of cold night air. "They are ready to being the celebration."

Luna nodded. "Tell her that we will be down soon; we still need time to ready ourselves." She told him. The guard nodded in response before leaving, shutting the door behind him.

Once the door was closed, Luna sighed heavily, using her hooves to take her crown off her head, setting her symbol of power on the dresser she was sitting at. She ran a hoof through her hair, staring at her reflection afterwards; many a night she would stare at that reflection, her lonely eyes meeting those in the mirror. The only thing that would understand her completely.

Even after a thousand years...nothing had truly changed.

"WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!"

CRASH!

Just as she was beginning to think about staying in her room that night, the vent above her dresser suddenly exploded as a large, fuzzy, dirt-brown spider easily bigger than her head came barreling out of the vent, landing directly on her face, screaming itself as it collided with the dark-blue alicorn.

The scream that erupted from the princess's lips could've shattered glass.

If anyone would've walked in on the scene, they probably would've died laughing: the goddess of the night herself jumping around and screaming like a six-year-old filly, beating with her forehooves at the large brown fuzzball with eight legs clinging to her face. Then again, anyone in her situation probably would've done the same thing. She danced backwards into her bed, tripping backwards as she fell onto the mattress. Her 'attacker' was sent flying off of her, squealing an insect's shriek before crashing into a nearby tea table, sliding across the top and crashing into the empty tray of a tea-set in the process, sending the entire mess crashing off the table with him in an 'explosion' of shattered china.

Luna scrambled upright on her bed, her heart hammering away in her ribcage as she clung to the blankets, another scream swelling in her throat as she shivered. *'Spider!* Really *big hairy spider!'* She mentally screamed, feeling like screaming at the moment, eyes wide with shock. *'Shoe! Shoe! Where's a sho-A* SHOE*?!'* She mentally slapped herself. *'What are you talking about?! You'd need a* mountain *to squash that* monstrosity*!'*

"Owwww...that time it really *did* hurt..." A high-pitched voice whined in pain. "I think I'm bleeding..."

Luna's jaw dropped. *'Did...did it just* speak*?'* She asked in astonishment. Then it hit her. *'It must be one of those Prehistorian Monsters!* That *would explain its size. Oh, where is that purple dragon when you do actually need him?!'*

A sad-sounding coo reached her ears; she dared a peek over the bed to see the spider himself standing at the edge of her bed, holding one of its legs to itself and looking up at her with the most heart-wrenching 'sad puppy eyes' look she had ever seen.

The creature she was staring at was a Tarantully, a small Neopteron-class monster that looked like a giant, chubby, cute Tarantula roughly the height, size and weight of the Pokémon Raichu;

larger by mass than CMC-aged foals but smaller than the average pony, about three feet long and, thanks to its horizontal body stance, only one and a half feet high. His round, egg-shaped body resembled a rodent's body more than that of a spider's; it wasn't segmented in the usual head-thorax-abdomen like insects/arachnids did, just a head attached to a body like any kind of vertabrae. The eight legs were also short in comparison to its body, but still long, each about four feet and ending in a spider's foot with stubby little claws, which didn't even look sharp; the first pair of legs could function as arms, the 'feet' of the first arms also including a thumb claw. The tip of a fat, stumpy stinger could be seen emerged from its rear, accompanied by a pair of hidden spinnerets. The head was round like a ball, possessing a spider-like but still mammalian face: two large eyes that resembled those of a changeling drone, no nostrils or visible ears, a mouth that disappeared under its fur when closed, leaving two large yet stumpy fangs poking out from under the fur, resembling mandibles. The fur was a dusty dirt-brown in color, with a trio of darker-brown stripes running horizontally down its 'spine', starting at the forehead and ending at the stinger; the hair on its legs matched its stripes, also having longer, stiffer, spike-like hairs covering the legs, and its eyes were pitch-black in color with a lighter shade for the 'pupil', but shiny and surprising adorable, like the eyes of a mouse or rabbit.

First mental reaction Luna had at the sight of the spider this close was jumping to the ceiling and clinging to the chandelier until help arrived, but that thought was put out of mind at the creature's appearance. It was obviously in pain, and it was looking to her for help...and those big 'bambi-ish' eyes.

It held out his arm to her, showing a nasty-looking cut adorning the undersize; must've been from the china.

"Are thou *kidding* me?!" Luna exclaimed, still slightly shaky from the recent fright. "First thou attack me, and now thou are expecting *help*?! Just how foolish are you, arachnid?!"

It didn't say anything; it just held out its arm a little more, whining a soft, pleading coo as its eyes suddenly became much shiner and sadder, even forming tears.

Luna held on for about three seconds before breaking.

"UGH! Fine..." She muttered, still staying on the bed as she reached down to the Tarantully and took his arm in her hoof. She was surprised by the feel of it; she was expecting a hard exoskeletion with prickly hairs, but the fur was incredibly soft, even more than rabbit fur. The skin was semi-hard and bug-like, but the fur made it very pleasant to the touch. Ignoring the feel, her horn began to glow softly with her dark-blue magic; the wound of the spider's arm began to glow with the same magic; its eyes widen in awe as it watched the magic slowly seal the wound back up, healing it completely.

Harry turned his arm about, giving his arm a look-over, before turning back to Luna with a pleased coo and a fur-hidden smile. "Thank you."

Luna managed a fond smile at the childish creature's antics. "You're welcome, yon Fuzzy-Face." She stated.

"But my name's Harry." Harry stated in confusion.

Luna couldn't stop the giggle from escaping. "Well then, You're welcome, *Harry*." She corrected...before returning to her gloomy appearance. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I must be somewhere." She stated half-heartedly as she slid off the bed.

She didn't get five feet before she felt a sudden weight on her head; her vision was then obscured by a fuzzy brown face with large black eyes. "Hmmmmm...you don't seem very happy." He stated curiously before hopping onto the alicorn's back like riding a real horse. "You should talk to me; I am excellent at telling people what to do."

Luna's cocked an eyebrow at him...but excepted his advice all the same; perhaps talking to someone would help, spider or not.

"Have you ever been..." She began, sighing. "...feared? Disliked? As if you go about your everyday life and even then everyone seems tense and fearful of you?"

"*Constantly*!" Harry exclaimed, throwing his stumpy arms in the air. "I can't go anywhere without somepony screaming 'EEEEEKK! SPIDER!' or something like that. I'm not trying to freak everyone out, but I still have to watch out for the occasional shoe and stuff."

Luna smiled, imagining the scene he had described. "No, what I mean is...as if you've done something..." She sighed again. "...*very* terrible, and even though you've been redeemed, you still can't help but see those that are still scared of you for what you've done?"

That left the spider silent for a while. "Well, no. Not really." He admitted.

"I thought so." Luna sighed softly, a single tear running down her cheek.

"What happened?" Harry asked with concern, hopping off her back and facing her from the front. "Did something bad happen?"

Luna looked down at the arachnid in front of her; it was the first time someone instead of Celestia had ever shown her any true concern; this spider hardly knew her...in fact, it had been injured by her, and still he showed her the first concern she had ever seen from a stranger.

"Yes..." She whispered. "...something *horrible*."

Then it all came pouring out, and she couldn't stop herself. Not even thinking about it, she just burst forward and explained to him the entire story; how she was the ruler of the night, of how all the ponies loved her sister and her day while they feared her and her night, and how that had led to her corruption into the dreaded Nightmare Moon. She also told him the story of her return and, after being purified by the Elements of Harmony, was able to find peace with her sister, but, despite her trying, couldn't bring herself to face the very ponies she had endangered and even *killed* during the War of the Sun and Moon.

By the time she was done, she was in shambles; her eyes and cheeks were wet with tears and her breathing was heavy and ragged, the hurt and regret of a thousand years bubbling out at last.

And it felt good.

Harry, in the meantime, didn't waver; he sat there patiently and listened to her entire explanation, his mandibles flexing occasionally as she spoke. His face was one of interest and wonder, but at the same time concern and sympathy. He was really listening to her every word.

Luna took a moment to collect herself, wiping at her eyes with her hoof. "Tell us, young Harry: do you honestly believe that the scars in my subjects had vanished completely after all that?"

Harry rubbed the back of his head with a claw, thinking hard. "They must be, if there's throwing this big party for you." He offered.

"We said *honestly*." She told him as she walked toward the balcony. "Nightmare Moon was...no...I was a monster.

"But that was over a *thousand years* ago!" The Tarantully said as he skittered after her. "Stories that old aren't even history anymore. Just legends and folklore; stories to make larva behave. The only ponies here that know what Nightmare Moon was like would've been those in the Summer Sun Celebration, and as far as they know the evil Nightmare Moon was destroyed in the Everfree Forest, even if you two were the same pony. For the rest of this 'Equestria', the night would've been just a little bit longer than usual; same as a cloudy day, and that all was forgotten in the news of Princess Luna's return."

"Is it *really* that easy?" Luna asked, stepping out onto the balcony with him, under they stood under a sky full of stars. "Has time truly erased all the terrible things I've done? I still remember, though, and I know my sister does too." She looked up at her beautiful moon shining through the night sky...where the Mare in the Moon was still forever forged into; an eternal reminder of the pony who brought it forth. "The Elements of Harmony may have freed me from the evil in my heart, but everything else is still there: the jealousy, the hatred, and the memories that led to my banishment in the moon...*one thousand years*! With nothing to do but plot, seethe, and hate. The gift those six gave me was beyond knowing, but the friendship and forgiveness I received afterwards astounds me even more sometimes...to think how much I wanted to hurt ponies..."

Harry didn't say anything at first, still trying to imagine a thousand years of isolation and pure rage and hatred; he knew a monster that felt the same way...no, not now; that was the past...wait! That was it!

"I don't know what that was like, but I do know someone who might." He offered.

Luna turned to face him, a sudden glimmer of interest and maybe hope in her eyes. "And who would this be?"

"Spyro's sister, Melody...though a lot of people nowadays call her Cynder after what happened." Harry told her, sitting himself down. "You see, she was a mermaid, just a girl too, when Spyro first met her, before he was adopted into her family, but she was kidnapped by an evil human named Kaos and a seawitch Morgana, who were planning to take over our homeworlds by unleashing an ancient monster called the Snakeasaurus..."

Luna's ears twitched. "Snakeasaurus?" She asked in surprise. "We-...*I* know of this beast."

Harry nodded. "Well, to do that they needed a Portal Master to open the portal to the Dark Master's prison, and the Trident of Poseidon to shatter the crystal he was trapped in...and Melody can do both. So, they used the dark magic of an evil purple dragon to transform her into an evil black dragoness: Cynder, the Terror of the Skies. As Cynder, she did..." He shuddered. "...very *horrible* things: destroying villages, killing and torturing innocents, and even destroying her home of Atlantica to get the Trident of Poseidon, almost killing King Triton himself...her own grandfather."

Luna looked horrified; for a young girl to be twisted in such a way.

He paused to scratch behind his 'ear' with his claw; a rather adorable act. "We did save her and our worlds though, but at heavy prices." He said sadly. "Spyro had to fight Cynder and defeat her to break the spell, and the Snakeasaurus did escape from his prison, but we managed to save Melody and save our homes. Everything's back to normal now...well, as normal as it can be now. Melody may be a mermaid again, but she obviously still guilty about being Cynder."

"But she was forced to do all those things!" The dark blue alicorn quickly objected. "I did mine at my own free will."

"I know, but only to an extent!" Harry whined sadly. "Black magic may have poisoned Melody into becoming Cynder, but she was still with her own free will. Everything she did was by her *choice*, even if she was darkened forcibly." He sighed sadly, looking up at the moon. "Sometimes she wakes up screaming and crying from nightmares of her being Cynder, and then she's sad for the rest of the next day. That, and I've seen dragons still scared or angry at her for being Cynder, and she's always hurt by them..." He then looked away with sorrow and guilt. "...and we all feel guilty as well, knowing that we had to hurt and almost kill her to free her..." He shuddered, remembering her raging roar of pain as his claws and teeth tore through her flesh of her neck; he swore he should taste her blood in his mouth. "...even though it was for her own good, especially Spyro...and yet we're all still living a happy life as one big family."

"But how?"

"She told me that everypony does things they regret and makes mistakes, and there's nothing we can ever do to change what's been done...but what doesn't kill us helps us grow stronger. She also told me that instead of trying to forget bad memories, she uses them to help move forward and keep from doing the same things again...and to help her forgive all of us for hurting her as Cynder." He told her. "Melody knows this, I know this, and now you do too. Do you ever want to become Nightmare Moon and bring eternal night again?"

"NO!" Luna quickly bellowed in the Royal Canterlot Voice, making Harry's fur puff up in fright like a cat's. "I-I mean...no. Not *ever* again."

"And Melody obviously doesn't want to be Cynder again...and I don't *ever* want to fight and hurt her ever again. The guilt and regret I still feel makes sure of that." The spider told the princess, his fur falling back to normal. "Now, I help her and Spyro protect our homes. Not just to make up for what I did, but because I know how important it is. You will *never* be Nightmare Moon again. The pony you are now makes sure of that."

To say Luna was moved would be a huge understatement. Never had she felt such reassurance of her past and for her future, and she knew now that there were others, including Harry and this 'Melody' he spoke of; perhaps she could meet this mermaid girl one day...but the matter of regaining her place in the world still weighed heavily on her.

"But just what kind of pony *am* I now?" She asked, looking at her own hoof. "I may not be Nightmare Moon, but neither am I that filly I once was so long ago...what do I even *do* now?" Her gaze returned to her night sky. "It was once my honor and duty to raise the Moon each night, but my sister has performed that task without fail for a thousand years in my absence. My return to it is only a token gesture. It would make little difference to Equestria if I were still sealed. What purpose in life do I have now?" She turned back to Harry. "I don't even know if I *like* who I am now." The alicorn admitted. "I suppose it's better than Nightmare Moon at least, but that's not saying much."

"Doesn't it say plently enough?" Harry asked, standing up on his four hind legs while placing his four arms on the balcony's rail, looking down on the party below. "There are already six ponies who like the new you; the Elements of Harmony! There's also your sister, and Spyro, Neublar, my brother Venom, and Savagera, otherwise they wouldn't be at the party for you. Look! There's Spyro right now, with one of the element ponies on that fancy window I saw!" He exclaimed, pointing down with a claw.

Luna looked down to see Spyro himself in the courtyard below, accompanying a familiar lavender unicorn in a blue dress. The sight looked as if they were dating, which made Luna giggle mentally at that thought.

"They like you, even though you were an evil unicorn lady, and I like you." Harry told her sincerly. "And maybe tomorrow you'll like yourself more than you like yourself tonight. That's what Melody says is as much as anypony can aim for."

Luna stared down at the party below before smiling warmly. "You're right, young spider. And thank you." She said thankfully, looking down on her new friend with grateful eyes. "You've given me the courage and hope to look forward to the future instead of dread it."

Harry smiled again, giving that pleased coo. "You're welcome!" He told her. He then looked down at the party. "So are you going to go to your birthday party?" He then asked.

Luna's smiled faltered. "Well, I'm not really sure..." She admitted.

"If you're scared, I'll hold your hand...uhmm...hoof, if you want too." He offered, holding out a leg to her; he wasn't making fun of her, but he was innocently trying to help her. "Maybe we could both go together!" He said with a happy coo.

She stared at his stumpy hand for what felt like another thousand years for th both of them before she smiled and nodded. "Very well, Sir Fuzzy-Face." She giggled fondly, taking his stumpy hand with her hoof. "We shall give this celebration a try, if not for us then for our friends who were gracious enough to come. It would be improper for a princess not to attend her own birthday celebration."

Harry cooed happily again. "Hooray! Let's go before they eat all the birthday cake!" He announced.

Luna giggled loudly, recalling Celestia's sweet tooth for cake. "Yes, let's!" She said in a playful boldness. So, walking side by side, Harry 'escorted' Princess Luna to her Birthday Celebration.

"You know, I've never seen a real live unicorn before." He told her and they left the room. "This is very cool."

"I appreciate your cool discovery in our species, but I am not a Unicorn." Luna told the Tarantully. "I'm an Alicorn, which have both wings and horns, as you can see." She told him, flexing her wings to demonstrate.

Harry stared at her wings with awe. "I always wondered what those were called." He stated, looking thoughtful. "I thought it was something like 'Pegacorn', or 'Unisus', but those sound more like snack foods than magical ponies."

Luna giggled again.

Ballroom:

It would've taken Rainbow Dash forever to find Venom if she wasn't able to fly, and even as she hovered about the room he was difficult to spot; anypony would think a giant cobra would stand out in a crowd of ponies, but apparently not. Then again, his bright colors and ability to slide underfoot without being found helped him to blend into this sea of colorful ponies. Damn snakes and their sneaky abilities...

But she found them eventually: he was coiled up on top of one of the round tables, half-a-dozen picked-clean plates stacked in front of him. He was staring out into the distance with a depressed look of his face and a distant look in his eyes. His frill was closed (a bad sign of his emotions), and about two feet of his tail was hanging over the edge of the table, the tip wiggling limply and lifelessly back and forth.

Venom heard the familiar sound of flapping pegasi wings approaching, and he looked up to see an equally familiar rainbow-maned pegasus approaching.

"So, coming to kick my tail again for insulting your princess, huh?" He asked half-heartedly, turning away.

Rainbow Dash took a seat in front of his head, sitting in the chair backwards. "Nah, I can't do that in a fancy place like this." She joked...though it had no effect, her own smile fading in response. "Come on, now. We're cool." She assured him gently. "But what's going on?"

Venom hissed deeply, his forked tongue flicking out with a hissing sound as well. "Look, I'm sorry about that whole thing with the princess." He told her, turning back to face her. "It's just..." He sighed. "I've had some very bad experiences with royalty in the past."

The cyan pegasus cocked an eyebrow. "*Bad experiences*?" She asked with some sarcasm, but still staying gentle. "Come on. It can't be bad enough to-"

"I was once captured by a royal family and thrown into a gladiator staduim as an arena beast."

Rainbow Dash's eyes went wide with shock.

The emperor cobra sighed again. "About ten years before I met Spyro, I was captured along with other creatures by the army of Emperor Cegustus, a ruler of an Roman-like Empire. I was locked up in a battle arena, where I was forced to kill both human prisoners/gladiators and fight against other monsters. They keep you locked up in dark, flithy cells and only feed you enough to survive but to keep you starving. You had to kill defenseless prisoners just to get enough food to last the night or fight armed gladiators or even other desert monsters to live...sometimes barely coming even close to surviving...all for the sake of entertaining a crowd."

Rainbow Dash said nothing, waiting for him to finish first.

"I spent over *10 years* trapped in that arena, fighting and murdering everything thrown my way, eventually becoming champion...until I was pinned against Spyro. On his first quest to save the free the crystallized dragons from Gnasty Gnorc's magic, he was captured by the same army, though willingly to get to the dragon statue in the emperor's palace. I fought against him like any other, but was defeated; for the first time in seventy years, I was defeated in a fight. That usually meant death, but Spyro spared me and together, with the help of the other Skylanders, we destroyed that empire, freed the trapped dragon, and escaped. I've never left Spyro's side since...I owe him my life."

The pegasus smiled a bit.

"But I learned a very important lesson about putting your faith and love in those you shouldn't." He then said bitterly, turning away again. "Especially royal blood."

"But Princess Celestia isn't like that at all!" Rainbow Dash objected. "She's the coolest princess we've ever had!"

Venom scoffed, lifting his head up to look at her. "Bah! And that's exactly how the people of Cegustus' empire felt about him." He hissed in disgust. "It was always the same: 'He's the greatest ruler of his time! He's fair, pure, and true to his subjects!' Bull. Shit. What make's you think your Celestia is any better? She forces ponies with false beliefs; what's the difference?"

Rainbow Dash glared at him. "What is *that* suppose to mean?!" She snapped angrily.

"Oh, please! You mean that whole fiasco about how 'she raises the sun every day and Luna raises the moon each night'?! Come on!" He snapped back. "You don't actually believe that do you? Everyone knows that the earth itself orbits the sun and spins on an axis, making it look like the sun and moon rise and fall."

"Maybe that's how your world works, but it's different here in Equestria. I've seen it for myself many times." Rainbow Dash continued calmly, though it was clear she was upset. "And yes; I believe it. After all, we have magic, something you thought didn't exist at first."

The snake opened his jaws to counter that, but came up short; his glare off into the distance, his eyes narrowed into slits as he growled with his mouth sealed shut. He then sighed.

"I accepted magic when I saw it for myself back in Atlantica, and I believe Celestia raising the sun when I see it for myself here." He finally stated. "And a magic white alicorn with aurora hair and a picture of the sun on her butt that claims to raise the sun won't mean anything until she proves it for herself.

Rainbow Dash growled in annoyance before grabbing Venom by the right side of his frill with her hooves and pulling his head and upper body off the table, scattering dishes and shattering glass all around the table.

"OW!" Venom shrieked. "What the heck?!"

"Come on, scale face!" The cyan pegasus snapped, pulling him along by the frill. "You've just gotten yourself into *big* trouble: you're going to have one of Twilight's scientific lectures!"

"*Oooooh*, the punishment of Tartarus..." Venom swooned sarcastically, rolling his eyes. Rainbow Dash merely tugged harder, dragging his serpentine body across the floor with him objecting in pain all the way. They continued like this for a while, earing a few laughs from watching ponies, until they reached another table across the ballroom where Twilight and Spyro were sitting at, enjoying slices of the smaller cakes and other desserts treats that were at the buffet, talking and laughing all the way...which they stopped to turn and stare oddly at the sight of a small, cartoony pony cowing one of the largest and most dangerous serpents in Prehistoria.

"What's going on here?" Twilight asked.

Rainbow Dash promptly dropped Venom uncerimoniously in front of the lavender unicorn, causing the snake's head to hit the floor rather painfully. "This bozo thinks Princess Celestia's a big fraud and says that her raising the sun is all one big lie!"

Twilight felt a pinch of anger tug at her knowing this snake just insulted her mentor and ruler. "Is that so?" She asked in Venom's direction.

Venom grumbled under his breath as he lifted his head up and pulled his trailing body back around himself in a coiled position, using his tail-tip to rub at his sore frill. "Sheesh, that's girl's got *grip*..." He muttered aloud. "...And yes, that is so!" He then snapped at Twilight. "Come on, Vampire Pony, you don't *really* believe that story, do you?"

The lavender unicorn didn't even hesistate.

"Yes, I do believe it. I have seen it and know that it is true."

Venom had a look of shock on his face now. "*What?!* Honestly, I'm actually disappointed. I thought *you* of all ponies would be logical enough and reasoned things out. At least that's the impression I got from you when you read Spyro's book. I didn't think you were the kind of person...uh...pony that would buy this kind of stuff."

Twilight felt a twinge of anger at his accusations against her, but she managed to control it as she responded. "Why do you reject it so readily? Without even knowing anything about it?" She asked.

"Because it's not possible!" Venom snapped in frustration. He then paused and cleared his throat, as if preparing a lecture himself. "I mean, lets assume, and we reasonably can assume, that your sun is similar to the suns of both Prehistoria and Starina, given that they can support life. That means it weighs approximately two billion billion *billion* tons. It has a circumference of around 2.7 million miles. It contains more than 99% of all of the mass in the solar system, granted the solar systems of our world are like those of the true Earth. It's not reasonable or logical to believe that a pony, alicorn or otherwise, is capable of moving an object of that magnitude, magic or not. And second of all, the sun is far more massive than the planet itself. The planet orbits around the sun, not the other way around. In other words, the appearance of the sun moving across the sky is an illusion. It's you and the planet you are standing on that's actually moving. Not the sun. I assumed someone as nerdy as you would have figured that out by now."

"What makes you assume I haven't looked into it?! And why do you assume that just because that's how it works where you are from, it works the same everywhere?" she asked, stomping her hoof on the table in annoyance.

Spyro merely kept his mouth shut, merely watching the snake run his mouth toward a slowly-growing-angrier Twilight and an already-pissed Rainbow Dash, waiting for the moment to jump in.

"It's not an assumption. It's well defined, based on a lot of observation of other planets and the stars they orbit. A star, by its nature, has to be much more massive then a planet. Otherwise nuclear fusion would not happen. A star that orbited a planet would fly in the face of everything we know about gravitational physics."

"So you think it is beyond Princess Celestia to be able to do this? Has it ever occurred to you that she might be powerful enough to make the rules of physics and gravity herself? That she might be a *goddess*?"

Venom outright spat a laughing scoff. "BAH! The only 'gods' that actually exist are those of Prehistoria's legends, and they are merely incredibly powerful and near-immortal beasts that are still bound to the laws of physics and mortality themselves...and the only reason I believe in them is because I've seen them and their power countless times." He stated. "Gods are merely superstitions that ancient people used to explain the works of the planets they didn't understand or, as in this case, brides by rulers to get their subjects unquestioned loyalty and co-operation. Rulers throughout history have used the same old song and dance for thousands of years: convince the people you're a god, and it makes them easy to control. Don't you see that's all *Molestia's* doing? As far back as the pharaohs of egypt, rulers have-"

"ENOUGH!" Twilight screamed as she leapt up out of her seat, using her magic to grab the snake by the head and slam said head upon the table, pinning him in place. Venom's shrieked with rage as his body thrashed about, smashing tables and sending panicked ponies flying before he ripped himself free of her magic grip, whirling on the lavender unicorn with a scream of rage that would make a devil's shriek sound like a kitten's mew.

Suddenly both were engulfed in golden arua, gently but firmly pulling the two apart; Twilight was set back in her seat while Venom was prompty dropped onto the floor. Everyone looked up (some, like Twilight, in horror) to see Celestia herself standing there, the magic of her horn fading while she glared disapprovingly at the two before her.

"What is going on here?" She asked sternly.

Twilight was already in shambles. "I'msorryI'msorryI'msorryI'msorry!" She begged in a panicked tone; the party was going to be ruined for sure now. "I was-"

"It's alright, Twilight." The alicorn goddess assured her, turning her glare to Venom. "You're not the one I was asking. So, a deceiver and a fraud, am I?" She asked the snake.

Venom merely snarled angrily at her, not at all intimidated by the pony before him; his body burst into green poisonous flames as he changed to Ophionaga form, crouched in a pouncing position, ready to strike.

Spyro decided to step in now; his horns glowed dark blue as he lifted and repaired the broken furniture that Venom had smashed thrashing about, the wood pieces fusing back together before the tables and chair were put back on the floor, fixing the damage caused.

"Didn't you learn your lesson about believing the impossible back when we first saw Atlantica?" The purple dragon asked angrily.

"Mermaids and the power to control the oceans are one thing, but the power to move the sun itself is downright ridiculous! These ponies are apparently more stupid than I thought to believe *Molestia* here can actually do it!" Venom snapped back.

A collective gasp of shock and horror filled the room; apparently the serpent's outburst had drawn in the attention of the entire ballroom. Loud and angry mutters throughout the room, along with a few cries like 'Heritic!' and 'Blasphemy!'

"Why, I oughta *beat his face in*!" Applejack shouted angrily, only to be held back by Rarity and Pinkie Pie.

"Oh *no*..." Neublar muttered, face-palming himself as Fluttershy gasped in horror. "I should've known something like this would happen."

But the shouts and mutters were all soon silenced when Celestia snapped her wings open; a sign that meant she wanted silence, and everypony listened and fell silent.

Except Venom.

"Maybe you can fool them, but I will *not* believe *anything* I cannot explain or see for myself!" He snarled angrily. Twilight, who looked ready to murder the reptile, faltered in surprise when she remembered saying that herself once.

Celestia, however, merely smiled. "Perhaps you'd like to back up your belief with a little bet?" She offered, staying calm and motherly but with a tone of scheming amusement in her voice. "If I prove that I can raise the sun right here and now, I win, but if I can't, you win."

Venom's tooth-bared snarl faded into a deadly smirk, but the glare remained. "Alright, then, but I set the stakes." He stated, tapping his lower jaw with his tailtip. "If you win, I'll kiss all four of your hooves in front of everypony here."

Celestia smirked; she was going to enjoy that. "And if I lose...?"

Venom thought for a moment longer, thinking up a devious humiliation for the alicorn before him. "Then you're forbidden from cake and all other desserts for a thousand years." He told her.

Rarity gasped dramatically...before realizing what he said. "Wait...that's it?" She asked.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'THAT'S IT'?!" Pinkie Pie screamed at her in pure shock. "DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?! *NO DESSERT FOR A THOUSAND YEARS*?!"

"Wow, that's *big*!" Harry whispered as he and Luna watched through a crack at the grand staircase's doors.

Luna nodded. "Are thou kidding?! Tia may be strong and powerful, but she can't go without desserts for a *day*; a thousand years would *drive her insane*!" She told him quietly.

"I accept your stakes!"

"Oh, I *really* hope raising the sun before morning is possible..." Luna muttered.

Then it happened.

Princess Celestia spread her majestic wings. Her horn started to glow a brilliant orange, which then started to change to yellow, and finally to a brilliant white. The light increased in intensity until it appeared that Celestia's entire being, and even the air around her was glowing with energy. The brightness of the aura surrounding her was so brilliant that even Spyro had to shield his eyes from its intensity. Even then, the brightness kept increasing, until no one was able to even look at her at all and had to turn their faces away—sure that the increasing light would burn the retinas if they continued to look at it.

Even from Spyro position on the other side of the table, he felt a radiant heat wave wash over him and envelop him. The aura from Celestia's magic expanded outwards until it too, had enveloped him. The energy flowing from her was not directed at him, but so intense was its power that even being in the aura caused a sensation of energy flowing through him—like he had grabbed onto a continuous bolt of lightening and a million volts of electricity was flowing through his body. But the sensation was not painful or unpleasant.

On the horizon, through the aura, everypony could see a faint glow in the sky that started getting brighter. The sun started to slowly appear, rising above the horizon. The entire event, so far, had lasted an eternity. No. It had lasted several eternities. And yet, at the same time, it had lasted only a few seconds, and a few minutes. Time, the movement of the heavens, even the very laws of the universe itself, had all bowed in submission to Princess Celestia.

Venom could only sit there, frozen in bewilderment, awe, and admittedly, a little bit of fear of the alicorn goddess...for there was little doubt left in his mind that is what she must be...and her power. The only movement he made was to lower his eyes towards the ground once the rising sun had become too bright to look at anymore.

Then to top it off, the sun was then forced back down to set...not in the west, but in the east: the very force of Time itself was sent into reverse as the dawn slowly slipped back into the night, all the way back to the early night of yesterday's past. After a few more seconds and a few more eternities past, the aura began to shrink and diminish in intensity, eventually subsiding completely as she completed the magical act, revealing Luna's night once more, as if nothing happened.

For several seconds the only sounds were the chirping of the crickets of the night ambience. Venom was still overwhelmed and unable to move, trying to process everything he had just experienced, overcome with a mixture of awe, confusion, and uncertainty about the fact that everything he thought he knew about science, philosophy, and even perhaps religion for that matter, was now suspect, and quite possibly, wrong.

Then came the cheers.

The entire room burst into an uproar of cheers and cries of joy, everypony stomping of clapping their hooves; their princess had triumph once again, and prove herself true to all. Celestia merely nodded to her subject, motioning with a wing for them to quiet down before turning back to Venom. The snake's gaze was cast to the floor, not out of shock or fear...but utter shame and disgrace of himself.

"I know why you speak badly of me, Venom." She told him. "I am aware of what happened in your life as an arena beast...and I'm sorry."

"What for?!" Venom asked, finally meeting her gaze...and surprising everyone with tear-filled eyes. "I was the one who said those things! I'm the one who doubted your word and power! I've finally met the ruler that everyone dreams of and I tear her down for no other reason than personal anger and hatred!" He sighed, hiding his face from her. "I'm sorry I did that...I'm so sorry..."

Celestia reached out a wing and wrapped it around the serpent's upper body, bringing the serpentine reptile in for a hug. Venom immediately stiffened at the feeling, but slowly relaxed, resting his head against her shoulder; her fur was softer than anything he ever felt, and her feathers even more so. The tears in his eyes finally ran quietly down his scaly face.

After over a hundred years of war and anger, he felt at peace in her arms.

Celestia let him go, allowing him to slide back down to the floor, coiling back up again; he used his tail to wipe the tears from his eyes.

"You're safe now." She told him with a warm smile. "Don't ever forget that."

Venom managed a small smile. "Okay..." He hiccuped, still sniffing softly. "Okay..."

He turned to slither back to the table when she stopped him once last time. "Don't think that changes our stakes." She said with a smile, lifting her hoof up.

Venom paled for a second, but then sighed in defeat. "When will I learn? When things look easy, run for the hills." He muttered. "Fine, fine...this is a party, anyway. All personal safety goes out the window."

Celestia merely held back the giggles as the emperor cobra kissed each of her feet at least one, blushing like mad; the crowd laughed good-naturely at this, especially Twilight, Rainbow Dash,

and Pinkie Pie. After that was done, Venom merely slithered back to the table and joined the others.

"That was a nice little bet." Celestia admitted. "But now you must excuse me; I'll have to prepare and write peace letters to keep the world wide panic of an out-of-control sun from getting out of control itself. I know Manehatten and Saddle Arabia will have something to say about it."

And with that, she left.

"Oh, gee." Venom muttered. "Perhaps I should've thought of that before-hand." There was a moment of giggles and silence before he spoke again. "I...I guess I owe both you and Rainbow an apology." He told Twilight. "I guess I did jump to conclusions."

Twilight smiled warmly. "It's okay." She told him. "And you're right too; a lot of non-ponies probably wouldn't believed the stories if they heard them."

Rainbow Dash grinned evilly. "So, how did it feel having to kiss the princess's feet in front of all of Canterlot?" She asked with a chuckle.

Venom smirked. "You're just jealous you didn't get to kiss the princess." He stated with an evil sneer. "Oh, wait. You only have those kind of feelings for Applejack. My bad."

POW!

"Oui..." The snake moaned before falling over, a horseshoe-print now smashed with his face and an angry Rainbow Dash grumbling something about 'horny boys' and 'not a filly fooler' under her breath.

Suddenly the room burst into noise as the royal ponies lifted their trumpets and blew the classic royal announcement fanfare; everypony in the room stopped chatting about themselves, dancing, or other such activities and turned to the grand ballroom staircase as the lights died down, a large night-blue spotlight's beam falling upon the grand doors on top of the stairs. Spyro heard Rainbow Dash whisper 'finally!' to Fluttershy as everypony hushed down as a regal yet rather small unicorn stallion dressed in a fancy if ridiculous royal suit stepped forward.

"Presenting her royal highness, Princess Luna of Equestria!"

The entire room burst into applause as the doors opened to reveal the Princess of the Night herself; blushing from all the attention, Luna made her way down the steps to where Celestia was waiting for her. The crowd continued to cheer and clap their hooves (stomping them was consider uncooth by the upper class) as the white alicorn wrapped a wing around her sister's shoulders, giving her a warm smile and hug, which she returned.

Then came the unexpected escort.

"Hi, Everypony!" Harry cheered loudly, jumping up from behind Luna's head, earning gasps and exclamations from the crowds.

"YYIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII!" Venom screamed at the top of his lungs in pure horror.

"Oh *NO*!" Neublar groaned loudly, grabbing at his head with his hands. "Not *now*...of all the times he had to show up it had to be *now*! Why *now*?!"

Twilight sent Spyro a certain...*look*. "Lemme guess. *That's* Harry." She asked flatly.

"Yep." The purple dragon stated just as bluntly.

Oblivious to all the looks he was receiving, Harry proudly marched forward with a swag in his skittering, head held up proudly and with a big smile on his insect-like face. "Everyone part like the red sea! It's me! Harry T. Tarantully! I'm in the house, and ready to a-par-tay!" Harry said, a beat in his step to the techno-dance beat that a white unicorn mare with a spiky blue mane and large, lavender googles had just whipped up on her DJ record player.

Celestia turned a confused glance to Luna. "This better not be another one of your pets, Luna." She whispered flatly.

Luna shot the sun goddess a glare of indignity. "You'd really think I'd adopt an animal that talked?!" She hissed back under her breath. "No, he's not one of my 'pets'; he's another of Spyro's friends. His name's Harry, and he fell into my room through the vent shaft he escaped from the chefs into." She told her sister. "And before you object to that, you should know he's the one who convinced me to come to the party tonight."

Celestia's gave her a puzzled look before merely turning back to the party.

Harry had been heading to the buffet when he spotted some familiar faces sitting at a distant table. "Venom! Spyro! Hey guys!" He cried happily.

Venom, who had been in a state of shock, quickly sprang to life and threw himself at Rainbow Dash's feet, grabbing the front of her skirt beggingly, much to her surprise. "Kill me, just kill me now!" He pleaded.

But it was too late; Harry gathered all of his legs up and jumped, clearing over a hundred feet before landing squarely on top of the table with a clatter of plates and cups. Twilight and the other girls cried out in surprise as the enormous arachnid landed forcibly on the table in front of them, skittering around to face Spyro. "Hey there, fearless leader!" He said cheerfully. "Some party this is, huh?"

"Awww, he's so cute!" Pinkie Pie swooned.

"Mind explaining to me what you were doing with Princess Luna?" Spyro asked sternly. "Or what you're doing here in Canterlot Palace?"

Harry's cheerful demeanor quickly changed to a timid one. "Ummmm...nothing that you're probably imagining right now, I swear!" He squealed.

Everyone (minus an oblivious Pinkie Pie) recoiled in disgust at *that* idea.

"*Gee*, thanks for burning that image into my head for all time." Venom groaned sarcastically, heading slamming on top the table. "And this night was just getting good, too."

"Sorry."

A few minutes later:

"...and then we came out to party!" Harry said cheerfully as he muched away on a cookie, the spider now sitting in one of the chairs at their table. Their entire table they were sitting was now covered in all sorts of food from the buffet table; it had practically become a buffet itself.

"I find the idea of you giving a big speech like that very unbelievable." Venom stated flatly before tossing a whole cupcake into his mouth, eating it in one bite.

Harry frowned. "Well it's true!" He muttered, quickly snarfing down another cookie.

Twilight giggled at the cute pout the spider was making. "Well, I'm glad how this night turned out." She stated, looking in the direction of Luna and Celestia, the former clearly in a joyful mood for her own party. "Princess Luna's having a blast, Venom's finally showing respect to Celestia, and we've found another one of your friends, Spyro." She told the purple dragon next to her. "And I believe the gangs all here now?"

Spyro nodded. "Yes. But we still need to keep an eye out for any other of our fellow Skylanders or monsters that may appear." He told everyone at the table, his voice clearly serious. "I don't know how they're getting into Equestria, but as long as they can, then Equestria's in great danger."

"Indeed." Savagera agreed, sitting across from the purple dragon. *"I can feel them in the Everfree Forest as we speak; they're hesistant, as is expected at first, but they'll grow bolder and soon Equestria could very well be destroyed just as Poke-World was."*

Twilight frowned, turning to Spyro. "But you said that Prehistoria was only opened by the Snakeasaurus, who died a long time ago."

"I know, I know!" Spyro exclaimed, obviously worried about the turn of events. "And this world is probably the furthest thing from Prehistoria! So *why*?! *Why*?!"

"Hold yer horses, partner." Applejack spoke up, stopping him before he over-reacted. "I dunna how this is happenin' either, but gettin' yerself all worked up isn't gonna help us. You don't need

to worry." She assured him. "Equestria's faced many dangers an' destruction before, and we'll do it agi'n."

"Yeah!" Rainbow Dash said in agreement. "We've faced a lotta oh-so tough bad guys before and kicked each and every one of there butts! Nightmare Moon, an evil goddess of the night, Discord, the spirit of Chaos and Disharmony himself! What's a few ugly monsters gonna be to us?"

Fluttershy squeaked in fright. "*M-M-M-Monsters*?" She asked trembling in fear.

Neublar placed a comforting hand on her shoulders. "Calm down, now. Yes, they'll be scary, but we can stop them as long as we stick together, right? That's what you, the Elements of Harmony, have been telling ponies for centuries."

"And with us Skylanders on Harmony Elements' side, those prehistoric punks won't stand a chance!" Venom announced, throwing a fist in the air alongside Rainbow Dash's hoof.

"Normally, I would disagree with such violent, disruptive behavior..." Rarity began, flicking her mane fashionably. "...but when the fate of all I hold dear is at stake, those reptilian ruffians are going to regret tangling with Rarity!"

Spyro chuckled, but nodded in agreement all the same. "No matter what we face, it will be our destiny to overcome it together." He said, extending his claw out.

Twilight stared at the purple dragon in awe...and then smiled warmly. "Together in friendship." She agreed, putting her hoof out to touch his.

"Well don't leave us out!" Rainbow Dash snapped, putting her own hoof out. "Count me in!"

"I'm in!" Venom added, doing the same with his hand.

"Count me in too, partner!"

"Yippe! I'm in three!"

"Count me in as well!"

"Oh, yes, me too...i-if you don't mind, t-that is..."

"You have my alligance!"

"And mine as well!"

Harry stared at them all before speaking up. "I guess this means we're staying here a while." He stated. "Oh well, good thing I like it here! Count me in too!" He exclaimed happly, putting his claw out with all the other claws, hands, and hooves.

"Together!" They all cheered, breaking apart in unison...and from the distant crowd, Celestia smiled in approval; looks like she was right about him...but that also meant she could be right about him being the other of the legend...but that could wait until later; with him fighting on their side, and with more elements and allies on the way, Equestria now had a chance to survive the on-coming storm...whoever may bring it.

The real adventure had begun!

(A/N: Once again, I'm REALLY sorry about taking so long with this chapter; I've been so busy with both Skylander: Giants and Garry's Mod that I haven't had much time for typing. Both of those games are so addicting, especially Garry's Mod. But I'll try to keep future updates from taking so long...Pinkie Promise.)

Next Episode: Slumber 1-0-1

12. Slumber 1-0-1

EPISODE XI: SLUMBER 1-0-1

VOOOOOOOOOMM!

"RUN FOR YOUT LIVES!"

"IT'S GONE MAD!"

"MY MANE IS ON FIRE!

"THE HORROR! THE HORROR!"

"Ye're all a bun'a pris-py pink pushobbers unworthsby of Gorc Flommer!"

"THAT SPIDER'S EATING ALL THE ROYAL CAKE!"

"Omomomomomomomom..."

"Take this, ya frickin' fan-dancer!"

CRUNCH!

"OOOOOWWW! MY ROYAL SPIIIINE!"

"Guys, stop! You're all Drunk!"

"Wab'sa munk? Muga whyiaba, I wubba zlammer..."

SMASH!

"The fun has been doubled!"

"Moist and Delicious!"

"Mine!"

POW!

"WWAAAAAAAAAHHHH!"

"LOOK OUT PRINCESS CELESTIA!"

"Huh?"

SPLAT!

"Let's get out of here!"

"What 'bout them?"

"I'll get Spyro, you help the other guys! Now hurry before...

PHWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANT!

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!"

"Too late..."

Golden Oaks Library, Next Day, noon:

"Oh, my head..." Spyro groaned in pain as he woke up with a splitting headahce. He opened his eyes and immediately regretted doing so as the bright light from the sun blinded him immediately and caused another wave of immense pain to go through his skull; he grabbed at his aching head with his claws, squeezing his eyes shut as he moaned ever louder.

'Damn Celestia and her stupid bright sun...' He growled mentally, holding his head with his claws. *'Right now Eternal Night sounds like a blessing from the ancestors.'*

He heard a soft giggle and opened his left eye a crack to see Twilight standing at the side of his bed, shaking with silent laugher as she grinned down at him, her eyes filled with mirth. "I warned you not to drink too much cider last night." She stated with amusement.

"Go 'way..." He groaned grimly, rolling away from her.

Twilight giggled again. "Here. Let me help." She told him; her horn glowed as she cast a pain-soothing spell on the dragon. Spyro relaxed with a relieved sigh as the headache slowly faded down, the gentle power of Twilight's magic soothing his brain; the headache wasn't completely gone, but now it was barely noticable.

"Thanks." He stated, rolling completely out of bed, landing softly on his stomach. "So, what happened last night, anyway?"

Twilight's lips tightened as she tried to hold her laughter. "Not much...except you roasted, zapped, froze, blew away, and smashed half the Canterlot elite with your elemental powers; called them all 'a bunch prissy pink pushovers unworthy of Gnorc Fodder', if I recall...Venom, Harry, Neublar, and Savagera joined you on your rampage, most of them being just as drunk as you were. Harry ate over half of Luna's giant birthday cake, I think Venom broke Prince Blueblood's spine, and Neublar unleashed another gas bomb on the public of Canterlot."

"Ah, man..." He groaned to himself.

"...and you hit Princess Celestia in the face with a blueberry pie right before you passed out."

"Oh, *horseapples*!" The dragon shouted, jumping up in alarm with eyes wider than dinner plates.

Twilight's attempts to quiet her laughter failed and she burst into a fit of giggles, covering her grin with her hoof. "D-Don't worry." She told him, wiping a tear from her eye before motioning him to follow. "The princesses actually enjoyed your 'rampage', especially Luna."

Spyro settled down, staring at the pony in confusion. "You mean Luna was actually *glad* I trashed her birthday party?" He asked as he followed her down the stairs.

Twilight nodded. "Believe it or not, she came to us after we escaped from the 'stampede of the rampaging dragon' and told us she *wanted* you and our monster friends to do that." She told him. "You see, she had heard about us ruining the gala and wanted us to do the same; she was always bored with these formal parties, and knew you guys would be the perfect spice to it."

"Right; nothing like a bunch of drunk monsters to get a party *really* started." Spyro muttered sarcastically as they entered the room below. "So, why did you wake me up again?"

"So you wouldn't sleep all day." Twilight stated flatly, using her magic to open Spyro's monster book...and to hand Spyro a stack of half-a-dozen letters. "Besides, I need you to send out these invitations to all the girls for me."

Spyro used his own magic to hold the letters, looking at them oddly. "What are they for?" He asked.

"My slumber party tonight; you and the rest of the guys are invited, of course." She said cheerfully, flipping through the pages of the book before her. "Now that all of your friends have arrived, I thought we'd have a slumber party to get to know everypony better! The time's at six tonight, and I've written down a list of stuff to bring on all your letters. There's even one for you!"

Spyro cocked an eyebrow, shuffling through the letters until he found the one with his name on it. "A slumber party? Last time I checked, that was a girls-only thing." He stated. "And girls and guys all sleeping together in the same room, regardless of species...not a good idea."

Twilight gave him an annoyed glare. "Well, then we'll make it a girls/guys' slumber party/sleep over." She stated with a wave of the hoof.

"*'You are formally invited to my first official all-friends slumber party at the Golden Oaks Library. Held at 6:00 PM tonight. Remember to bring the following: sleeping bags, toothbrushes and toothpaste, any essential items you need to bring, and one kind of snack food for all of us to share. P.S.: Bring lots of your snack foods; the boys are coming too.'*" Spyro read out loud from his own letter. "Okay, I'll come, but for safety measures, I suggest you girls all bring and wear pajamas as well."

"How come?"

"Another procaution to take in a mixed-sexes sleep over." The purple dragon stated, an uneasy look coming over his face. "You do not want to fall asleep unguarded in the same room with a Emperor Cobra of the opposite gender. *Trust* me."

Twilight's face erupted in a deep blush. "But...but we're not even the same species!"

"Doesn't matter to them."

Still blushing, the unicorn took the letters back from the dragon; after a few minutes of adding a P.P.S. to every letter, she placed them all back into their envelopes and handed it magically back to Spyro. "There, now while you go deliver the letters, I'll clean up the library and get everything ready here."

"Sure, but why don't you just use the mail?" Spyro asked as he opened the door.

"Well, my party's tonight, and...to be honest, I don't trust the mail service of PonyVille with my more important letters." Twilight admitted.

"How come?"

"Let's just say one of their postal delivery ponies is a bit...accident prone."

The purple dragon hummed in thought a bit; he then merely shrugged it off and bounded out the door, taking off into the sky once he was out in the open. Perhaps he should meet this 'accident prone mail pony' someday to see if Twilight's word was true.

Twilight, groaning to herself, returned to her book. "And he calls us ponies crazy..." She muttered to herself, grabbing her mug of coffee with her magic...

6:00 P.M.:

Come six o'clock, Twilight, Spike and Spyro were joined by Applejack, Fluttershy, Rarity, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, Neublar, Harry, Venom, and Savagera. Along with all the sleeping bags set out all over the floor, there was also a large table set out with multiple bowls and trays of party foods and snacks for the night in the room over, where the fireplace was: Applejack brought freshly-baked apple fritters, Fluttershy brought animal cracker cookies, Rarity brought vesty cucumber sandwiches, Pinkie Pie brought freshly-baked cupcakes, Rainbow Dash brought cheesy party snack mix, Spike brought gems, Neublar brought giant dough pretzels (real pretzels, not the crunchy stick carvings that come in the bags), Venom brought chicken nuggets (carnivores only), Harry brought no-bake cookies, while Twilight had set out the s'mores supplies. Spyro and Savagera brought their own meals of roasted deer and sheep meat, and all the food that was there was in huge supply thanks to the monsters.

It was a bit crowded with all the monsters in the library, but it was going to be a fun little get together. As the girls all settled down on their sleeping bags, Spyro couldn't help but grin at how cute they all look in their pjs; like a bunch of stuffed animals dressed in their little accessories. Twilight was wearing light blue pajamas with white sparkles all over them that matched her gala dress in color, Fluttershy a long creamy-pink shirt with a picture of a teddy bear on the left breast (identical to the teddy bear she had brought along), Rarity a fancy purple evening gown/robe combo, Rainbow Dash a dark-blue spagetti shirt and black shorts, Applejack an orange shirt tied around her chest and a pair of light-blue jean shorts, and Pinkie Pie wild-looking magenta pjs with smilely faces and lollipops all over them.

"Now, I would personally like to welcome everypony to my very first all-friends slumber party!" Twilight addressed everyone once they were all settled in. "I've already had one with Applejack and Rarity, but since that one didn't go so well, I decided to do another one! And we'll be doing it all according to this."

She used her magic to pull out a book which she handed to Spyro, who took it with his hands and read it out loud. "Slumber 1-0-1: Everything you've ever wanted to know about slumber parties but were afraid to ask."

"A how-to guide? For *slumber parties*?" Venom asked, turning to Applejack and Rarity. "Is she serious?"

She didn't seem to hear him. "It's a fantastic reference guide, you should see the table of contents! I used it with Applejack and Rarity and it worked great!"

Spyro turned to Spike. "*Really*?" He asked.

"What can I say? She loves her books." The baby dragon stated. "Just try and roll with it, okay?"

"No no, it's cool." Spyro told him. "Just...weird."

Harry sent an odd stare his way. "I just hope this doesn't wind up like Melody's birthday party, with them wearing clothes and all."

Down came Spyro foot on top of the spider, squashing him flat. "You guys agreed never to mention that again!" Spyro snarled.

"I'm just saying..." The spider squealed weakly.

"Umm, just out of curiosity, why are we wearing these garments?" Rarity asked, smoothing out the skirts of her robe. "Not that I'm complaining about the fabulous fashion, but how come?"

For that Twilight sent a glare Venom's way. "Well, Spyro was considerate enough to warn me that *certain species* have a tendency to take advantage of unguarded mares." She said warningly in Venom's direction.

The emperor cobra couldn't stop the shameless smirk at all the blushes from the girls. "Who? *Me*?" He asked sweetly, giving them all the most innocent look he could muster; by his power, a halo of glowing green serpentine energy formed over his head with the classic 'ting' sound.

"Oh, give it a rest..." Rainbow Dash, the only girl not blushing, snapped, using her wing to blow away the halo.

"Didn't you learn your lesson when you were hacked to bits by Stealth Elf?" Neublar asked, folding his massive arms; he turned to the girls. "Don't worry, though. *I'll* make sure he doesn't try anything *stupid*." He told them, though his voice was mostly directed to the snake in the room.

Venom snorted, but heeded his warnings; if he knew the Amphibiod, then he would probably not be able to move for six weeks should he get caught...though the naughty smirk of humor returned to his face.

Twilight ignored them as she flipped through the pages of slumber 101, reaching the first chapter after a few pages. "We'll run the same thing we did last time...and that means the first item on the list is..."

'It better not be Makeovers.' Venom thought, his smirk turning with a scowl.

"Makeovers!"

"I am *outta* here." The snake suddenly snapped, slithering toward the door.

"Oh, no you don't!" Neublar stated with an smirking grin, slamming a hand down on Venom's tail and stopping him short. "You're gonna stay and do this with all your little pony friends like the brony you now are."

"*Brony*? Seriously?" Venom asked, cocking an eyeridge at the frogape.

"It was Harry's idea."

"Made it up myself." Harry cooed happily. "It's like ponies, but being bros, and-"

"I get it." The emperor cobra sighed. "Nah, let the girls do their thing. Yo, Spike! Gotta deck of cards around here?"

Spike looked confused. "Yeah, why?"

"Cause while the girls do their little makeovers, we'll show ya how to play poker."

Twilight looked a little put off by this, but she let it go. So while the girls put mud masks on each other and put curlers in the hair (as if Pinkie Pie needed anymore curlers), Spyro and Venom sat in the corner with Spike while teaching him how to play poker...which was a lot like teaching the old Ash Ketchum the concepts of romance and sex: a lot of blank, clueless stares. The funniest thing about the makeovers was the one Harry was receiving, not knowing how to play poker and wanting to do girl things with the girls; all of the girls were giggling like crazy as they gave him a mud mask and put curlers in his fur, while Neublar was busy gently brushing out the manes and tails of the ponies with a brush, showing his own abilities to be appreciated in the company of girls. Savagera merely laid back and watched the others, patiently waiting for a time where he could do his thing.

As they started their first game, Rainbow Dash came over. "Hey guys, can I play too? Or is this a 'guys only' thing?" She asked.

Spyro cocked an eyebrow of amusement as he shuffled cards through the air. "Did I hear right? Does the great Rainbow Dash wish to join our little game? What, afraid of getting a little mud on your face?" He asked coyly, making Venom snicker under his breath.

The cyan pegasus plopped herself down. "If that's a different way of saying 'I hate makeovers', yeah." She stated flatly, not at all amused.

"Good enough, we'll deal you in."

Rainbow Dash was a big help, as she actually knew how to play poker and was able to give Spike a few pointers. It pretty much devolved into a Rainbow-and-Spike vs. Spyro-and-Venom, which resulted in the latter team losing.

A lot.

The rest of the girls finally finished with their makeovers, which promptly disappeared in a flash of Twilight's magic. Spyro cocked an eyebrow at this. "So, you girls give each other makeovers, which take about thirty minutes, then you magically take them away, leaving absolutely no discernible difference in your features?" He asked incredulously.

Twilight gave the dragon a weird look. "What's your point?"

"Nothing, just making sure. So what's next?" He asked as they all got comfortable on their sleeping bags.

"Well, as I was about to say, next up is..." She double-checked the book. "...Ghost Stories!"

Savagera's ears perked up at this.

"Now *this* one I can roll with." Venom stated as he coiled up next to Rainbow Dash on her sleeping bag. "Hit me with your best shot!"

Fluttershy looked terrified. "G-G-G-G-Ghost S-S-Stories?" She whimpered in fright, quickly cowering under her sleeping bag while squeezing her teddy bear tightly.

Neublar smiled sympathetically, gently tapping the trembling mass in the bag, causing Fluttershy poke her head out of the top. "There's no reason to be scared." He assured her. "It's just a story; it's all made up."

"You...you really think so...?" She asked.

"I know so." Neublar told her, reaching into the bag and scooping her out gently with one arm. "Besides, if you do get scared, you can sit by me."

A soft tinge of pink appeared on Fluttershy's face, her eyes full of gratitude. "T-Thank you..." She whispered softly, taking her place next to the huge ape, who gently scooped his arm around her protectively.

Spyro smiled warmly at the scene.

Twilight was smiling too, but then broke the moment. "So, who wants to go first?" She asked.

"Me!" Rarity called, holding her hoof up.

"*You*?" Harry asked dryly, his eyelids forming the 'cocked eyebrow' expression. "This is gonna be *boring*!"

"You said it, fuzz-face." Venom agreed flatly.

Glaring at the spider and serpent, Rarity sat in the center and prepared the mood: she dimmed the lights, minus one lamp in the center of all of them (cliché), gathered everybody in the center of the room where we couldn't see anything but each other (amateur), then started speaking in this low, creepy voice (HOLY-nah, boring).

Then began the ultra-terrifying tale...no, *legend*...of 'The Wolfpony', which, for those who have been living under a rock for the past one hundred years, was basically a ponyized version of The Wolfman. Spyro nearly fell asleep listening to her tell it; not only was the story, especially the pony version, pathetic compared to the horrors and stories of Prehistoria, but Rarity was obviously not the type of pony or voice to tell scary stories and be taken seriously. Neublar looked concerned, but otherwise bored. Harry and Venom had actually fallen asleep sitting up, both swaying back and forth slightly while snoring. Savagera was...wait...where did Savagera go?

However, all the girls, even Rainbow Dash, were scared. Frickin. Shitless.

Now, it's a well known fact that when girls are really scared of something, like a scary story or movie, they'll cling to something for comfort and/or protection, usually their best friends or boyfriend. So, what happens when they're only one guy who's not scared in the whole room that's actually worth clinging too and not snoring away or focusing on only one pony, especially one large enough to share.

So there Spyro was, sitting in the middle of the room, with Twilight, Applejack, Pinkie Pie, and Rainbow Dash clinging to him in terror...and even he couldn't stop the grin on his face; who wouldn't enjoy being snuggled up by a bunch of beautiful girls?

Neublar, who was holding a trembling Fluttershy to himself like a parent would a frightened child, looked over to where Spyro was sitting. Seeing the grin of the dragon's face, he smirked himself. "If only Brock could see you now." He stated quietly.

Spyro smiled himself. "Totally." He whispered back. As an added move, he wrapped his wings around the ponies clinging to him.

Spike was scared too. But one, he wasn't clinging to anyone and two, he was still sane enough to notice his idol's position. "You think you're so cool." He muttered.

"I do, actually."

"...And they were never heard of again." Rarity finished dramatically; once she was done, She then noticed how all the girls were clinging to Spyro, looking terrified, while he was happily sitting there hugging them.

"You can keep on going. I'm fine." Spyro stated with a cheeky grin.

The white unicorn rolled her eyes. "I can tell." She stated sarcastically.

With a flash from her horn, the lights came back on, which immediately snapped the rest of the girls out of their terrified trance, also waking Harry and Venom up. Realizing their positions, Twilight and the other girls all blushed and quickly retreated from their 'protectors' and back to their own respective sleeping bags: Twilight and Fluttershy looked like they were about to curl up and die.

"That was the most *boring* scary story I have *ever heard*!" Venom exclaimed.

Rarity glared at him. "I beg your pardon?! You and Harry were asleep for more than half of it!"

"Exactly my point! The story's no good it you fall asleep during it!"

"Oh, and you think you could've done better?"

"*Fluttershy* could've done better."

ROWR!

Everyone screamed/shrieked/roared in alarm as the lights all suddenly went out with a flash of purple light and a sound resembling a mix between a thunderclap and Savagera's caterwaul roar, plunging the entire room into *pitch black* darkness; Twilight couldn't see her own hoof in front of her own face.

But that didn't matter as Savagera himself lit up the room with his glowing stripes, mouth, eyes; all they could see of him were the glowing parts, creating a terrifying image of a glowing skeletal shadow of a monster with horrifying eyes and a set of razor-sharp teeth standing out against his glowing throat. *"So...it's fear you want, is it?"* His dark voice echoed throughout the room as he slithered about the darkness, sending chills of terror up everyone's spines. *"Then it is fear you shall recieve, for it is* my *turn to tell the story of terror, and I call mine...the Rainbow Factory."*

Spyro braced himself; The Fangs of the Night were truly masters of fear, and whatever story he had to tell would leave everyone here with nightmares for *years*...

"...Rainbow Dash approached Scootaloo, who had given up on the struggle for life. The saw was sharp in her jaws, and the filly could see her own bloodied reflection in it, a broken shadow of her former self. Casting one last look at Rainbow Dash, she barely recognized her sister anymore, except for the red circles that glared at her. So, with her final breath, the dying filly let loose the last thing she could say to the pegasus she once loved:

"You have the most beautiful eyes"."

With those final words, the glowing skeletal story-teller faded into the darkness, sending the room back into pitch blackness once more...

The lights suddenly came back to life, revealing an amused Savagera staring at the result of his scarring tale of carnage. Everyone in the room was frozen in a postion of complete terror: Once more all the girls, minus Fluttershy, were clinging to Spyro, only now the looks of *utter terror* on their faces bested Rarity's story by an infinite amount; Fluttershy looked like a ghost herself, her limbs locked around Neublar's arm. Rainbow Dash, however, looked the worst of all, the story portraying her as the infamous monster. Spyro, though not frozen in terror, was obviously terrified, his eyes squeezed shut as he sat there in still fear. Neublar, Harry, and Venom were all frozen in place, their eyes wider than dinner plates, pupils tinier than pencil dots, and their fur (for Neublar and Harry) was standing on end, making them look like giant puffballs. Neublar was hugging Fluttershy, though it was probably out of fear as well.

ROWR!

Savagera unleashed a tiger's roar, making everyone jump out of their terror stupors with screams; Neublar (dropping Fluttershy), Harry, and Venom rocketed into the air, crashing into the ceiling in unison, collapsing back onto the ground with a crash, which caused Spyro to fall forward and throw the girls forward, all of them tumbling forward across the floor. The scream was all Spike needed, the baby dragon rolling backwards in a faint.

"That...THAT WAS *HORRIBLE*!" Rarity screamed angrily at the Twilodon, pushing Applejack off her. "*MONSTROUS*! DOWNRIGHT *BARBARIC*!"

"You wanted fear, and I gave it to you." Savagera told her. *"Maybe now you won't take your little life of peace and quiet here for granted."*

"But why did you make *me* the villain?!" Rainbow Dash snapped angrily, flying up to scream at him. "I would *never* do that to Scootaloo, or anypony! Not even to Billy, Hoops, and Score! Especially for something as stupid as a test we don't even have!"

"Then you have nothing to worry about."

"Fine, fine." Venom spat, rubbing the bump on his head with his tail. "But next time, warn us before you decide to expose us all to the *darkest pits of Tartarus!*" He spat angrily. "Oui...I need to eat something."

"Good, because the next item on the list is S'mores." Twilight told him, rolling over on her feet before flipping through Slumber 101.

Spyro looked confused as he got up. "*S'mores*? No offense of your intelligence, but the last time I checked, this library is a big tree; fire in a tree? Not a very pleasant scenario."

Twilight laughed, which was enough to bring her out of her traumatized state. "It isn't a problem when you have a magically protected fireproof house like I do." She assured the dragon. "After all, why else would I let two dragons live in here?"

Spyro paused, staring into space. "Good point." He finally admitted.

Fun fact: S'mores, just like any kind of concentrated sugar or powered cheese snack, are a great method of stress relief: only a few minutes of consuming the plushy, sugary pieces of heaven and all the girls were back to talking and giggling amongst themselves again; the guys would talk with them as well, but they were more interested in the s'mores and other snack foods on the table, which Harry and Venom were greedily consuming. Spyro merely laughed as Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash got into a squabble over the last cupcake, over to have Harry gobble it down before they could blink; he then went back to his roasted deer leg, tearing off the slightly-bloody meat with vigor, adding the party mix for cheesy flavor.

"See, you have to carefully turn the marshmallow so that each side receives an equal amount of heat, no too much and not too little." Rarity told Fluttershy, instructing the creamy pegasus in the art of...marshmallow roasting. "...Leave it there...turn it...turn it...and...done! There we have it. Perfect!"

Spyro snorted. "Meh. You do it like this."

He lifted his marshmallow up to his face and, charging his elemental power, exhaled a miniature stream of fire upon the marshmallow, which promptly burst into flames. He kept the stream going for about five seconds before cutting it short, shaking the stick free of flames afterwards. What was left only vaguely resembled a marshmallow; more like a chunk of coal.

"Eww!" Rarity squeaked as she backed away. "You're not really going to eat that, are you?"

"I'm a dragon; we like our food well done." He stated coyly, tossing the coal-marshmallow into his mouth; it crunched while he chew, but he enjoyed it all the same.

"Boy, what a freaky story, huh?" Pinkie Pie asked Harry as they pigged away on the snacks. "I mean it was really scary! Almost as scary as the time I had to babysit for the Cake's twins for the first time!"

Harry glared accusingly at Rainbow Dash. "And to think Scootaloo was her own *sister*." He muttered bitterly. "She's even more twisted than the rest of the ponies *combined* that work in that place."

Pinkie Pie frowned herself. "Yeah, what a real meanie! I mean, hacking up foals for colors is one thing, but to do it to your own *little sister*?!"

"I know, right?"

"It wasn't real, guys!" Venom exclaimed exaggeratedly, giving them an odd glare. "It was a just a story Savagera made up!"

"...oh...it was?" The pink party pony and brown giant spider asked in unison.

"Oui..." Venom groaned, slapping his forehead with his tail afterwards.

"Don't bother." Twilight told him as she and Spyro joined them. "I've tried to figure out what Pinkie Pie's all about once; didn't end to well on my part."

"Gee, thanks for the warning." Venom grumbled sarcastically, still glaring at Pinkie Pie.

Spyro frowned in concern. "I don't get it, though..." He began, earning Twilight's attention. "How come none of you knew Scootaloo was an orphan to begin with?"

"I don't know. Really." Twilight said, her own voice one of conflicted thought. "She seemed perfectly fine with everything, and she never did tell us about it, so we never gave it any thought...though I guess it should've been obvious. I mean, she's more than old enough to know how to fly; what kind of family of anypony, pegasi or not, leaves their pegasus daughter grounded?"

"Even this world has darkness in it." Venom stated flatly, pouring a bunch of pringles in his mouth. "Hence the fact you have orphans...and that Trixie girl back then...speaking of Scootaloo, where is the little chicken, anyway?"

"She and her friends are back at my place, with their own li'l slumber party." Applejack said from across the table. "Big Mac's keepin' an eye on 'em."

"He must haves his hooves full." Fluttershy giggled, remembering her own experience with the CMC.

"Help...me..." Big Mac whimpered as he dangled from the ceiling, hog-tied like a bull in a rodeo while the girls ran about the house, giggling and scampering about like rocket-powered mice.

So yeah, s'mores were fun. Mostly because either burned or normal, they tasted great; all sugary and chocolatey and stuff. So, after a few more moments of sugar and cheesy consumption, they all returned to the main room with the snack bowls, all getting comfy as Twilight looked up her book.

"So, what's next?" Rainbow Dash asked, finishing off her last s'more. Pinkie pie, who had somehow managed to cram one hundred and thirty-seven s'mores into her mouth, swallowed them all whole and looked to Twilight as well. Note to self: do not mess with Pinkie Pie.

"Well..." Twilight muttered, skimming through the book. "...next on the list is: Truth or Dare!"

'Ah, crap.' Spyro groaned mentally.

"*Alright*!" Venom cheered. "I *love* this game!"

"I have never heard of this game." Savagera stated, laying down in a cat-like fashion near Applejack. *"What is the goal and how to you acheive it?"*

"Well, it's not so much a game." Twilight told him. "Basically you take turns asking anyone here a question, or dare them to do something, and they have to answer it or do whatever you dared them to do, as long as it's not dangerous or completely forbidden; and when they ask you a question or dare you to do something, you have to do it just like they have too."

"Sounds intriguing. Count me in."

Spyro shook his head. "Count me *out*. I hate this game." He stated, standing up. "Everytime I play it, my good name gets scarred for life."

"Awwwww." Pinkie Pie whined, giving the purple dragon 'bambi eyes'. "Please play!"

"No."

"C'mon, Spyro!" Rainbow Dash begged, giving him watery eyes as well. "It'll be no fun without you!"

"Yeah, I'll bet." Spyro muttered bitterly.

They both blushed, but continued 'bambi-ing'. Rarity looked uninterested, Spike was nodding like he understood, Twilight was leafing though the book: 'How to get Dragons to Play Truth or Dare with You: Ten Easy Tips', Fluttershy wasn't saying anything, and Applejack-

Ah, crap. Now Applejack was doing it too. Must...look...away...from...those...eyes...

"Ugggggggghh!" Spyro finally growled. "Fine, I'll play."

"Yaayyyyyyyyyyyyyy!" Pinkie Pie and Harry cheered.

"Are you sure?" Twilight asked him.

Spyro shook his head. "No, but let's do it anyway. This is a party, right? Like Venom says: personal safety goes out the window." He stated as he settled down next to Twilight and stretched his forelegs. "Let's just get this over with."

The sleeping bags were gathered into a circle, and the game of Truth or Dare commenced.

This is going to end badly.

Twilight levitated forth an empty bottle of soda, setting it in the center of them all. "We'll decide who goes first with this." She told them; she then spun the bottle like in the 'Spin-the-Bottle' fashion, the glass spinning around a couple times...before slowing to a halt in front of Venom.

"Yes!" Venom cheered, green flames bursting forth as he transformed mid-jump, landing back down as an ophionaga. "Now then...who first..." He hummed in thought, tapping his bottom lip with his finger-claw. "Ah-Ha! Rarity! Truth or Dare!"

Rarity's eye twitched. "Ummm...D-Dare." She stammered nervously.

Venom grinned evilly; just what he wanted. He then leaned all the way over to Spyro and whispered in his ear; as Spyro listened, a dark grin formed on his own face. Suddenly, the dragon lashed his head in the direction of the nearby fireplace, firing a concentrated ball of glowing, dark-blue water the size of a basketball from his mouth. It flew through the air, trailing a trail of sea spray like a comet's tail, before it splashed down on the fire, dousing it out completely and leaving a sloppy mess of soaked ash and timber. Everyone watchined frowned in confusion as Spyro used his magic to crush the whole pieces of wood into sawdust, mixing all the mess up into a large pile of grey filthy glop, letting it flop back to the fireplace floor with a sick-sounding 'slpoock'.

"I dare Rarity to roll around in that glop until she's covered from head to toe!" Venom sneered, pointing to the fireplace.

The gasp of pure horror from Rarity was only matched by the 'squees' of pure delight from Applejack and Rainbow Dash. "I-I-I won't do it!" She defined boldly.

"You have to. It's the rules." Twilight stated flatly.

"...Fine..." The white unicorn growled, removing her robe and nightgown before slowly and glumly making her way to the fireplace; her glumness was soon replaced with fear and disgust, her body trembling as she slowly reached a hoof out. *'Just pretend it's a mud spa, just pretend it's a mud spa, just pretend it's-'*

BOOT!

"EEEEK!" She screamed; since she was taking too long for Venom's taste, the emperor cobra came up from behind and gave her the classic 'foot to the butt launch', sending her flying forward into the glop with a splash.

SPLAT!

Venom, Rainbow Dash, Applejack, Harry, and Pinkie Pie was burst into hysterical laughter, all rolling about on the floor as Rarity was sent spinning about in the glop by Spyro's magic, the purple dragon grinning at he then pulled a possibly-drowning unicorn out of the fireplace. She was a disaster now: her pure white coat and luster purple mane with now dark grey and sloppy, the gunk oozing down her body and onto the floor she was standing on, frozen in place with a look of shocked trauma on her face.

"Don't you think that was a bit much?" Fluttershy asked.

"Hey, you girls are playing with Venom T. Cobra here." Venom said coyly. "I play *hard-core*."

"Is that so?" Rarity growled demonically, making the snake cower. "Well, then! I dare Venom to do something dangerous, *horrible, terrifying, and that leave him in agonizing pain*!" She screamed at him.

There was a moment's silence before-

"Okay!" Venom said cheerfully, promptly shoving Rarity back into the fireplace.

SPLAT!

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAGGHH!" Rarity 'roared', jumping up and bolting after the snake, eyes filled with a murderous fire; Venom laughed as he zoomed around the room, pursued by a rage-crazy unicorn, hell-bent on tearing him joint-from-joint. All the girls and monsters alike were cackling at the two, even Fluttershy (if you can call Fluttershy's laughter cackles instead of high-pitched giggles).

"Since I'm...busy with...this here..." Venom managed to call as he zoomed by. "...Rainbow Dash...can have...my turn!" And with that he zoomed out the door, with Rarity roaring after him.

"Alright!" Rainbow Dash cheered once the racket have finally calm down. "Let see...Spyro! Truth or Dare."

Spyro groaned. "Truth."

She grinned. Oh boy. "If you *had* to choose once of us to be your girlfriend, which one would it be?" She asked, laying out straight in the air, chin resting over her hooves while giving him a rather suggestive stare. "Not counting your sister, but one of us six girls here."

Spyro's eyes narrowed in annoyance. "Isn't that the most obvious question in the universe?" He muttered out loud. "Let's see...I-"

"AAAGH! NOT THE FACE!"

He sighed in aggravation. "One moment." He told them, his horns glowing; a few seconds later, Venom and Rarity reappeared in the room; Rarity was free of her mess, which seemed to bring her out of her fit, while a crumpled pile of cobra coils that had once been Venom had enough horseshoe prints smashed into him to last a lifetime.

Despite his pain, he simply cracked his elongated spine back into shape. "Totally worth it." He stated with a chuckle, twisting his neck back into place with a painful-sounding 'cr-r-rack!', the horseshoe prints slowly healing back up with glowing serpentine energy.

"Easy for you to say." Rarity grumbled, levitating a brush from her bags, absentmindedly brushing her hair with it. "My humblest apologies for that little outburst, but it seemed *somepony* needed a lesson in respect and discipline."

"It's about time someone gave one to him." Neublar chuckled, arms folded.

"Hey!" Venom snapped halfheartedly. "So, what'd we miss?"

"Rainbow asked Spyro who he would choose as a girlfriend from us six girls." Twilight informed them.

Rarity gave the dragon another suggestive stare, fluttering her eyelashes. "*Did* he now? And what is the answer...?"

Spyro, slightly uncomfortable from the seductive stares he was receiving, hummed in thought...then answered.

"Twilight."

The lavender unicorn's face lit up in a shocked blush. "*Me?!*"

"BWAHAHAHAHAHA!" Rainbow Dash cackled, falling backwards onto her sleeping bag. "Y-You're kidding, right? Out of all of the girls here, you'd choose the *egghead*?! *Seriously*?! She likes to *organize books* for fun, for crying out loud!"

Twilight lowered her gaze, feeling slightly hurt from Rainbow Dash's words...especially from their truth; what would he or any other stallion see in a *bookworm* like her...?

"Maybe he has a thing for the Sexy Librarian type." Harry stated nonchalantly.

Venom leaned in to the spider's earhole. "Or the Sexy Vampire type." He whispered coyly, both of them snickering.

POW! POW!

"Oui..." They both groaned, grabbing at the giant bumps adorning their heads; Twilight growled under her breath as she placed the book she used back on the shelf.

"You two were right the first time, though it's not sexual attraction I was aiming for." Spyro stated, getting Twilight to lift her gaze up shyly. "If I was the type to fall for a girl for beauty alone, then I would've done when I was still human. Besides, all of you girls are pretty, so what difference *would* their be if I were to choose beauty over personality? I like Twilight here because she's brilliant and can make good conversation; the kind who isn't wider across the bust than they are between the eyes. That, and she was the first pony I met that showed be kindness and respect, rather than those calling me 'bub' or 'monstrous brute'." He directed the last part toward Rainbow Dash and Rarity.

The cyan pegasus and white unicorn blushed with nervousness. "Um, yes, well..." Rarity muttered, clearing her throat as she and Rainbow Dash looked away, grimacing.

But no one was blushing more than Twilight; she had, not once, ever meant a male of any species that bother looking at her anywhere other than past her cutie mark. Back in Celestia's School for Gifted Unicorns, despite being Celestia's private and personal student, she had met plently of stallions in the school who tried their luck with her, but she dismissed them off one by one, all only hitting on her for her looks; she was not the type of mare who swooned over every handsome stallion who came her way, and eventually even the more persistent ones gave up and left her alone, much to her satisfaction...but this was the first time *any* male, dragon or not, had ever said he liked her for more than looks...

...wait, why did she even care?

"So, yeah. I'd choose Twilight because not only is she a good friend, but she's also a nice change from the human females I grew up with." He stated, recalling many moments of obvious romance he had been oblivious too. "Man...it was if they were *created* for sexual attraction alone! That's what I like about ponies; you're pretty and cute in a non-sexual way. A guy couldn't have a talk with the women from Poke-World without getting distracted by breasts the size of *yoga balls*, or skirts that reach down only to their *belly buttons*!"

Venom naughty smirk returned. "If that's one positive thing to say about humans, is that their females were *hot*!" He said aloud, snapping Twilight out of her thoughts. "But let's discuss inter-species relationships later. Your turn, Spyro."

Spyro, after casting a brief glare at Venom, then thought up his own question. "Spike. Truth or Dare."

Spike gulped. "Truth." He said almost immediately. He then paled; why on earth did he say truth?! He didn't want to give anything away! Spyro was probably going to ask if he had a crush on Rar-.

"What is this Smarty Pants incident I keep hearing about?"

Spike's horror seemed to jump from the baby dragon to the lavender unicorn sitting near him; Twilight's face became one of utter worry the very instant Spike's worried look became a smug grin. "Oh, that's *hilarious*!" Spike began. "It all started-"

He didn't get any farther thanks to Twilight zipping his mouth shut with her magic once more.

"Ah, ah, ahhhhh..." Spyro scolded the purple pony, shaking his pointing finger at her. "He has to tell me, and you have to let him. It's the rules, remember?"

"But-" Twilight began.

"Darling, he's right." Rarity scolded her. "I had to go wallow in that filth that Rainbow's snake made me do, so you have to let Spike tell the story. Besides, they are probably going to learn about it eventually, so you might as well get it over with."

Twilight looked as if she was about to protest again, but eventually she gave in, releasing Spike with a sigh. "Fine. Just get it over with." She murmured, blushing.

Spike took a moment to lick his lips first; having them turned into metal zippers was rather uncomfortable. "Well, it all started just after the girls beat Discord; you see, in all the commotion, she forgot to write Celestia a letter of friendship that week..."

"...and that's why we all have to write friendship letters to Celestia." The baby dragon finished. By then every guy in the room was either chuckling heavily under their breath or bursting with hysterical laughter, even Spyro, leaving Twilight's cheeks as redder than Poke-Balls.

"Yeesh, and here I thought an angry Rarity was scary." Venom laughed, wiping a tear from his eye. "But all shall be wary when Pyscho-Twilight is slithering about..." He said darkly.

Twilight 'hmmphh!'ed, giving everyone a cold shoulder. "I wouldn't talk about slithering about if I were you." She muttered. "Besides, you'd go crazy too if you saw *Fluttershy* hog-wrestle a full grown bear into submission."

"Ummm...Twilight?" Fluttershy murmured, earning everyone's attention. "I-I wasn't fighting the bear. I was helping him."

"...*what*...?"

The timid pegasus ducked a bit at Twilight's dead-panned tone. "Well, um...Mr. Beariston had some stressful muscle problems in his shoulders that had been making him cranky, and I was just helping to massage them back out again. Umm...I'm really sorry I frightened you."

"Wha...but...you mean this whole time I could've still gone to you?!" Twilight shrieked, making Fluttershy jump back with a frightened squeal. "I- But- You- and it-...UGH!" She finally shrieked before slamming her face down on her pillow with a loud 'Fwmoop!'.

"Let me get this straight..." Savagera then spoke up. *"After your destined victory over Nightmare Moon, Princess Celestia sent her prized student and the leader of the Guardians of Equestria away from the studies of Canterlot to this small town to learn the concepts of* friendship*? I understand that she'd want to keep all of you together when disaster arrives, but why would you and her be wasting all this time learning about something as trivial as friendship."*

Rainbow Dash grinned. "Guardians of Equestria...*that* sounds *cool*." She said in thought.

Twilight looked up from her pillow, still laying on her sleeping bag. "The Elements of Harmony are the power of friendship itself; the very essence of unity. Their power comes from the strength of our bonds."

"I could guess that." Savagera stated flatly. *"What I meant was why do you have to* learn *about friendship? The feelings of alliances through fondness come instinctively, don't they?"*

The unicorn looked away bashfully. "Well, I've spent most of my life as a loner." She admitted softly. "The only people I could call friends were my brother, my foalsitter, and Spike here. I was the type who was more concerned with my studies and duties then I was wasting my time around other ponies...so I didn't really know how to respond to these feelings of care I have for my friends."

"All work and no play makes Twilight a dull girl, right?" Harry asked innocently, earning a soft scolding push from Neublar.

Twilight blushed. "Yeah...kind of." She admitted. "So Celestia assigned me to stay in PonyVille so I can learn how to actually have friends, so that the Elements of Harmony always stay strong should danger to our world comes along."

Savagera snorted. *"Still sounds like a waste of time to me."* He stated. *"If Celestia was truly serious preparing for war, then she would be teaching you combat and battle strategies, not how to behave at tea-parties!"*

"Not everything is shoved by killing people." Neublar told him sternly. "Even I, a monster myself, know that. War is easy to sing of when you don't consider the losses the innocents of both sides could face."

"Besides..." Applejack added. "...we're not preparin' fer any kin'na war. There hasn't been'a war in Equestria fer more t'an a thousand years!"

"Then I say you're highly *overdue for one."* The Twilodon growled darkly.

"Let's just finish the slumber party..." Spyro snarled in annoyance. "...it's getting late, and I'm getting tired. That question counted as Savagera's truth or dare."

Twilight nodded, levitating her book over to her. "I think we've had enough of Truth or Dare for the night." She stated, flipping through the pages. "Now, the next and last thing on the list to do is: Pillow Fight."

"Hooray! I love pillow fights!" Pinkie Pie cried, grabbing her pillow and slamming it down on Rarity's head. "Free for all!"

The next ten minutes could only be described as pure awesomeness.

Everyone went nuts. Spike immediately snatched up his own pillow and engaged Spyro in a one-on-one duel, though he was quickly losing fast. Twilight was getting her revenge against Venom for that truth or dare thing, using her magic to mercilessly beat the flying snake down to earth. Fluttershy hid (no surprise there), while Rarity was being utterly destroyed by Pinkie Pie. Neublar was being pelted continuously by Harry, though the spider's soft pats had little effect on

the massive ape. Savagera merely sat back again and watched the battle with amusement, until Applejack beaned him over the head, starting their own fight where he used his tail to bat pillows at the orange earth pony.

Spyro managed to beat Spike enough that he surrendered. "HA! YOU PUNY FOOLS ARE NO MATCH FOR THE PILLOW FIGHT KIN-" He received two pillows to the face by Applejack and Rainbow Dash.

"Rainbow, I think t'is drag'n's gettin' too cocky fer his own good. Whadd'ya say?" The farm chick said coyly.

"I say we put him in his place!" Rainbow Dash grinned evilly.

Spyro swallowed nervously, backing up. "Hey girls...how's it goin-?"

"GET 'EM!"

The purple dragon soon found himself the subject of a pillow beat-down, unable to respond under all the attacks. "Can we call a truce or something?" He cried.

"Shut up and take it like a stallion!"

Spyro coughed up the feathers, breaking his head free from the pillow storm. "Monsters! Retaliation!"

Almost immediately, Neublar, Harry, Venom, and Savagera broke off whatever they were doing and quickly came to their leader's aid; Neublar used his ape-sized pillow to promptly swat Applejack away, while Harry and Venom teamed up on Rainbow Dash, sending her down to the ground in a burst of blue and white feathers. After recovering from her flight, Applejack quickly turned to the girls. "Hey y'all! How do ya feel about a little gang-up? Mares versus Monsters!"

All the girls stopped fighting/hiding and quickly regrouped. It was now a stand off, the Mane 6 facing off against Spyro and his Skylander Team, all armed with pillows and ready to fight; Spyro grinned confidently. "Alright, guys. Get ready to-"

"Sorry." Neublar said rather suddenly, he and the other monsters dropping their pillows. "But you're on your own this time."

Spyro recoiled in shock. "*W-What*?! But that's not fair!"

Dash winked at the dragon. "Who said anything about being fair?" She asked coyly as the girls slowly stalked toward him, grinning evilly.

"GUYS!" Spyro cried in horror, sweating nervously as he glanced back and forth between them.

Venom grinned as he and the others back off. "You've got this, 'Pillow Fight King'." He sneered with amusment as they headed downstairs.

"I think it's time we guys called it a night." Harry cooed, skittering off to his bed downstairs.

"Let's see you negotiate your way out of this one." Savagera growled darkly as they all disappeared.

Spike looked at Spyro, then at the girls, and then he set his own pillow down. "Sorry, bro. You're on your own." He stated, running off after the others.

"CHARGE!" Twilight yelled.

Spyro roared in panic and defeat was he was consumed by the barrage of fluffy whiteness. He managed to hit Pinkie Pie in the face once before going down, collapsing to the floor as he was pounded away by dozens of pillows. But they were really soft pillows, so it didn't really feel uncomfortable; More like a massage that went on for about five minutes. When they were done, they just dropped the pillows on the dragon and collapsed, laughing at the sight of him completely buried in the white puffiness; all Spyro could see was white, but it was rather comfy, so he stayed put.

He felt something poke the pillow on the right side of her face. "Hello? Spyro? You still alive in there?" Twilight asked with a giggle.

"Remind me to pound all four of those dorks later." He stated flatly.

Twilight giggled; the pillows suddenly glowed purple and were all lifted off of him at once, floating over to the side and losing their glow, dropping to the floor. "Sorry, tough guy." She stated with a smile...before she yawned. "Well, I think my first ever All Friend's Slumber Party has been a success, despite a few minor bumps along the way. I say it's about time to call it a night."

With a few more yawns, all the girls agreed; soon the monsters came back up from downstairs and each took their sleeping spots on the floor or in sleeping bags. Twilight used her magic to carry a dozing Spike up the stairs and place him in his basket-bed, tucking him in; turning out the lights, she climbed into her own bed and slipped under the covers, the young pony practically melting into her mattress...

...but sleep wasn't going to be easy tonight...

Rainbow Dash approached Scootaloo, who had given up on the struggle for life. The saw was sharp in her jaws, and the filly could see her own bloodied reflection in it, a broken shadow of her former self. Casting one last look at Rainbow Dash, she barely recognized her sister anymore, except for the red circles that glared at her. So, with her final breath, the dying filly let loose the last thing she could say to the pegasus she once loved:

"You have the most beautiful eyes."

"AAAAAAAHH!" Twilight screamed as she shot up in bed, eyes wide in terror. It was a lot more terrfying to see the event of Savagera's dark tale than it was to merely hear it; her heart pounded heavily in her chest, sweat running down her forehead like streams. She whimpered as she hugged herself, her ears flattening as she recoiled from the horrors she had just witnessed...a few tears coming to her eyes.

"Twilight?"

She gasped softly, looking down to see Spyro lift his head off his pillows to look up at her, eyes shining in the pale moonlight.

"S-Spyro!" She stammered, wiping her tears before the dragon could see them. "I-I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you."

Spyro's face softened, a knowing look coming to his eyes. "Savagera's story, huh?" He asked. Twilight's ears perked up slightly in surprise, but they lowered back down as she nodded. "That's what I thought...come here."

Twilight squeaked in surprise when she felt a dark-blue magical aura gripped her entire body; it was strong...*very* strong...but incredibly gentle as she was levitated off the bed, through the air, and set down onto Spyro's bed, right next the dragon himself. Her face paled as Spyro used his magic to place her in the curve of his serpentine neck while he laid on his stomach.

"W-What are you doing?" She asked in a frightened tone.

"Shhhhhh..." He soothed calmly, using an arm to bring his blankets up over them. "It's okay. I'll protect you from the nightmares." He assured her.

It was then Twilight gazed into the dragon's eyes. They seemed to shine in the moonlight, like gemstones, the cat-like pupils giving off an aura of mystery and danger...but at the same time they were filled with kindness, concern, and care. A soft tinge of pink came to her cheeks as she stared into those eyes, her own full of wonder.

"...Spyro?" She asked quietly. "Did you see that dream? Is that why you're awake?"

Spyro shrugged. "I don't know if I saw your dream or dreamt my own version, but I saw the Rainbow Factory all the same." He whispered back. "But I woke up when I heard you scream."

Twilight frowned in concern. "You weren't scared of that nightmare? That was horrible!"

A sad stare came to the dragon's face, his gaze looking away in the distance. "I've been through worse than that." He admitted. "So it didn't scare me that much."

"...oh..." She murmured, looking away in shame. Spyro noticed her guilty look and tucked a claw around her, gently holding her body almost like a child would hold a teddy bear; she looked up

again to see him smiling softly at her. That was enough to bring a small, blushing smile to her own face. Spyro then rested his head down next to hers and closing his eyes. Her blush deepened when she realized how close his face was to hers, but she calmly laid her head on her pillow, soon relaxing as she snuggled gratefully against the dragon's warm scaly hide, a soft smile adorning her face as she slipped peacefully into a dreamless slumber.

She was truly safe from the nightmares now.

Canterlot Palace, Hall of History:

Celestia smiled warmly as she and Luna stared upon the window depicting the Elements of Harmony, though her sister was pretty much in shock at seeing the magic changes it had gone through: where there was once five gems surrounding the center jewel, there were now ten, though the newer ones were slightly smaller than the others. The newer arrivals, being dark red, dark green, dark blue, dark gold, and dark purple, filled in the gaps between the first gems, which were now positioned to reveal missing spaces on the right of the stand, as if there were main and smaller jewels still missing, the gold base and sun-like symbol in the black now a brilliant diamond-white, like a brilliant star. And on top of it all, they was another main jewel, one that was as large as the center gem, acting as the base for all the others: the legendary seventh element.

Also, a transformation had become one of the old gems. The green gem, representing Loyatly, had now become a swirling mix of all six colors of the rainbow, glowing brilliantly with its own colorful light...the colors matching Rainbow Dash's mane. As a result, the center jewel, representing Magic, had begun to glow itself; it was faint, barely noticeable, but it was glowing all the same.

"It..." The younger alicorn swallowed. "It appears you were right after all, sister. Perhaps Spyro is indeed the seventh element."

"Indeed, my sister." Celestia told her with a knowing smirk. "Star Swirl was right when he predicted it's arrival, and already one of the elements has unlocked her true potential; Twilight and her friends are well on their way."

Luna nodded, but kept her frown. "...but there are still more elements to come, and already the darkness of Prehistoria is descending upon the lands. We've have sightings and even death reports coming from Manehatten, Fillydephia, Saddle Arabia-"

"I know, Luna, I know." Celestia said calmly, her face now serious. "I have already stationed soldiers at all the major cities of Equestria. So far the attacks have been scarce...but that won't last. That's why we need to find the rest of the elements. They are the only ones who can stop this."

Luna agreed with his sister, but something remained on her mind; something else Star Swirl had foretold. "Celestia...what if Spyro *isn't* the seventh element, but instead the...*other* one?"

The sun goddess remained quiet, her face stern in thought. "I severely doubt he would be...but if he is...I...I don't know what we'd do." She stammered; her face remained with that look until she merely pushed those thoughts aside. "We will cross that bridge when we come to it. Until then, I shall continue to search for the missing elements, and you..."

"Yes?"

Celestia smirked. "You shall continue preparing yourself for your battle with Spyro."

"You've got to be *kidding* us!" Luna screamed to the heavens.

Celestia merely grinned.

(A/N: Well, this chapter was shorter than most other, but it marks the end of the sudden OC dump in my story. Now I can concentrate on getting the main plots into swing; once again, thanks for sticking to my story and please be patient for the next chapter...which will be my first multi-part special!)

Next Episode: Derpy of the Dinosaurs - Part 1: I Just Don't Know What Went Wrong

13. Derpy Of The Dinosaurs - Part 1

(A/N: Yeah, yeah, I know I promised a Return to Atlantica chapter before this, but my passion for typing and writer's block toward mermaids had other ideas, and you guys wanted me to update soon, so here it is. I'll have the other story up and going real soon, just hang in there people.

So, Season Three has come to an end...all too soon, if you ask me; only thirteen episodes? I mean,* really*...but what a way to end it! Twilight's an Alicorn Princess now...hmm...

AWESOME!

When I first heard about the episode, I was all like 'man, now Twilight's gonna be immortal and lose her friendships' and 'now Hasbro is Jumping the Shark', but that episode was* great*...well, not so much the episode itself (the songs were a ton of fun, but the episode was rushed and undeveloped), but the end results are both amazing yet satisfying! But everyone calm down; Twilight's obviously not immortal or changed at all

inwardly. She merely has wings now, so everybody keep your pants on (as confirmed by Hasbro themselves, so everyone chill). Sure, this just killed almost all the great Fanfics and all those about Twilight becoming an alicorn, but it's all the same* amazing, *and had a lot of great songs too! This means, with Twilight being an alicorn and a princess, the adventures of the mane six are no longer confined to little ol' PonyVille anymore;* all of Equestria *is before them now, and who knows what kind of cool and crazy adventures await them! Man, now I'm all psyched for Season 4 (which* will *have a confirmed 26 episodes); it's gonna be* amazing*...and have tons of awesome stuff for the potential sequel to this story!

...which is a lot more than what I can say about the new Double Rainboom fan episode that recently came out. The animation and voice-acting were spot-on, and the first half was great. What ruined it? It. Crossed. Over. That's what...and with Power Puff* Girls*, no less, along with glimpses of just about every show on Cartoon Network: the very sewage line of children's television. As some of you may know, I hate Cartoon Network and everything it spawns with a deep passion, even the shows evidently created by Lauren Faust...that, doubled with the fact all the really good episodes of MLP-FIM came after she left the show (at the end of Season 1), makes me question just how good an author and director Lauren* really *is: MLP may be the only good thing the apparent failure of a TV show maker ever made. Oh, well. Thank God or whatever's out there crossovers are not, and hopefully never will be, true canon. And I had been looking forward to that episode, too...

Now that that's outta the way, let's get back to my story: okay, this is my very first multi-part special! This special is dedicated to one of my favorite FIM characters, and possibly the most beloved fan-based character in the entire franchise: Derpy Hooves.)

EPISODE XII: DERPY OF THE DINOSAURS

PART 1: I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT WENT WRONG

Derpy's House, Next Morning, 7:00 AM:

The rooster's crow with the sunrise was what aroused Derpy Hooves from her sleep, the sunlight falling directly over her closed eyes. She frowned, squeezing her eyes tightly in an attempt to hold onto her rapidly-fading muffin dream, but she soon lost the battle. She yawned widely while stretching before she slumped back into bed, a cross look adorning her face as she stared at the ceiling. It had been blueberry muffins too...

Oh well, no use pouting over imaginary muffins; she had a job to get ready for.

She rolled over to roll out of bed, but once again misjudged the distance from the center of the bed to the edge; with a squeal of surprise, she rolled over too far and fell out of bed with a loud *thud*, pulling down all the sheets on top of her. The silly-looking mass under the sheets kicked and struggled while murmuring muffled words of surprise before she finally poke her head out at the top of the pile, gasping comically for air. She giggled as she pulled herself out of the sheets, accidentally tripping over one and falling one again onto the floor.

"Woops..." She giggled again as she gathered herself back up. Dusting herself off with her tail, she trotted merrily over to a mirror in her bedroom. She looked left, then right, and then back to the mirror; giggling like a little school filly, she makes a couple of funny faces in it, which were only made funnier by her silly-looking eyes; 'laugh and find joy in your own flaws and they won't be flaws anymore', her grandmother always told her...that way, when people laugh at you, it won't hurt as much.

Pushing aside those memories, Derpy continued her day; she quickly hopped into the bathroom, taking a quick shower and brushing her teeth...though she got the soap and toothpaste mixed up *again*, resulting in a nasty surprise. After rinsing the bubbles from her mouth, she reached down to the drawer with her brush, grabbing the handle with her mouth and pulling.

Nothing.

She pulled again, harder this time.

It wouldn't budge.

Scowling at the drawer and determined to open it, she steadied her footing and heaved; this time the drawer gave way, suddenly dislodged by the force of her yank. Derpy herself was sent flying backwards into the wall on the other side of her room, yanking the drawer out of its place in the process, the pegasus slamming up against the wall with a thud. Birds can be heard chirping merrily as she recovers from this tumble; shaking her head, her eyes focused for a brief moment to inspect the carnage that now surrounded her. The contents of the drawer had spilled all around, the brush she was looking for now laying at her hooves.

"Rats, not again...' She groaned mentally, sighing in frustration. *'I'll clean this up later; I don't have time now.'*

After a quick brush of her mane, she trotted down the stairs to the kitchen; she grabbed a large brown bag from a nearby chair and went to the pantry, opening it up to find, in her opinion, the most beloved creation ever made by pony-kind.

Muffins.

There was just no mortal words that could describe them. Muffins were probably the most marvelous food ever created by pony chefs. So many different kinds and choices, beautiful explosions of flavor, yet with such humble and ordinary appearances. Muffins were truly a gift

from Solaris and Faust themselves...but so little appreciation! Most ponies would take pies, cakes, or Pinkie's cupcakes over a good muffin any day! Honestly, ponies just don't know how to appreciate a good thing when they have one!

After she stuffed her bag full of muffins, she flew into the living room to fetch her professional mail-hat and mail-bag. To her surprise, she found them sitting on the couch just waiting for her to pick them up: a classic-looking mail-hat and a large brown bag full of letters and packages. Along with her things, there was also a note lying next to her hat, drawn out in the red crayon scribbles of a young filly; setting her muffin bag next to her mailbag, she picked up the note with her hooves and read it aloud.

'Deer Mom

Alrudy at scholl

Dinky

Derpy smiled; it seemed like it was only yesterday she was just a baby filly with bright eyes and a wonderful little laugh...they grow up so fast, don't they? Oh well, it was good that Dinky could go to school on her own and still be safe during the day; it was tough earning enough money to feed yourself and your baby girl when you're only a mail-mare, who has to get up early to get to work and couldn't afford the time to take your kids to school. She was lucky enough to get that job to begin with, let alone keep it all this time, thanks to her...conditions.

Whistling a familiar tune to herself, the pegasus mare set the note aside and put on her mail cap; smiling proudly, she then reached for her mail bag...

...oh.

There were *two* brown bags on the couch. One has mail, the other has muffins. How to find out which one has which?

Mail...or Muffins?

Derpy stared sternly at the two bags, trying to decide which one she was suppose to take. How on Equestria was she going to find out which bag had the mail in it?

BONG...BONG...BONG...BONG...BONG...BONG...BONG... BONG!

The bell tower struck eight: She was late for work! Just choose and go! Squeaking in surprise, the pegasus grabbed one of the bags and bolted through the front door, spreading her wings and taking off into the sky, the breeze caused by her taking off sending a single letter floating gently out of the remaining bag...

Golden Oak's Library:

Spyro stirred from his sleep to the ringing of the bell...and to the hoof poking in the side of his face. "Wake up, sleepy head!" Applejack's country accent rung in his ears. "Time ta hit the day bright'n early!"

"Mmph...what time is it?" He muttered glumly.

"Eight."

He cracked open an eye to see all the girls now awake and standing in front of him, their stuff all packed and sitting in the corner of the room, including their pj's. Pinkie Pie was full of her usual amount of energy (does she even need to sleep?), Applejack was looking wide awake and ready to tackle the day (typical country hick...), Rarity was fixing her hair (mane, whatever) with a mirror and comb, Fluttershy looked shy but alert (must be used to getting up with her animals) and Rainbow Dash looked...like she was recovering from a hangover. She must be exhausted too.

"Wake me up in three hours..." Spyro muttered.

"Three hours!" She looked at the rest of the girls. "Is he serious?"

"Well... let's face it, AJ..." Rainbow mumbled. "... you do get up kind of early compared with the rest of civilization..."

"I must agree with Rainbow Dash, Applejack. I've pulled all-nighters before, but getting up this early does absolute horrors to my mane. Just look at all these knots!" A distressed Rarity showed Applejack her mane, which was apparently full of invisible knots that only she could see. "It's an abomination when it's like this!"

"Well *I* think that Spyro's here is just bein' silly. There's nothing wrong with getting' up a bit before everypony else! It gives ya a good head-start on the day!" Applejack said cheerfully.

The purple dragon turned his head to look at orange earth pony. "And just how early are you used to getting up?" He asked bitterly.

"I get up at six o'clock sharp everyday. Have since I was a filly, but it was nice t'get a few extra hours of sleep this time around."

"Yeah...I get up at around ten-thirty or eleven normally. If there's anything important happening today, please, by all means, wake me up, but you'll excuse me if I don't change my sleeping schedule just to suit you girls. Now if you don't mind, I have an appointment with my subconscious." He told them, rolling over away from the ponies...and on top of something alive.

"EEP!"

"What the-?!" The purple dragon exclaimed as he quickly scrambled off whatever he crushed, completely awake now. He looked down to see Twilight sprawled out on her back, rubbing her

sore head with a hoof; it took the purple dragon a moment to recall last night when he brought her down to protect her from the nightmares.

"Rudest. Wake-up call. *Ever*..." Twilight stated flatly, sitting up in bed...

BOOMPH!

Rainbow Dash's wings suddenly went stiff, the sudden movement gaining Spyro and Twilight's attention. The five perky/fussy/sleepy ponies were all now in the same pose: standing still, eyes wide with shock, cheeks erupted in full-blown crimson. Applejack and Rarity had a shared dropped-jaw expression, Pinkie Pie had a huge grin on her face, Fluttershy looked almost terrified, while Dash shared the first look with the orange earth pony and white unicorn, but with wings sticking up straight and stiff.

"Twah'...ya got a *lotta* explainin' to do." Applejack stated, her face becoming just as stern as her tone.

It took a moment for the confused unicorn to catch on, but once she did her own blush was even deeper than her friends'. "W-W-What?! No! No! *NO*!" She quickly exclaimed. "I-I-It's not like t-that at all, I s-swear!"

"And *you*..." Rarity suddenly growled, turning on a sweating-furiously Spyro. "...how *dare* you sleep with a unsuspecting filly! We trusted you, and *this* is what you do?!"

Spyro swallowed nervously, well experienced with the injuries angry girls can cause. "You've got it all wr-!" He tried to object, only to be cut off by Applejack.

"I can see that Spyro would do somet'in' like this, but I expected better from ya, Twah'light!" The farm mare scolded the ever-growing-angrier unicorn. "I mean, what's *Princess Celestia* gonna think of this?!"

"*Excuse* me?!" Spyro snarled in indignity.

"Does this mean you're a couple now?!" Pinkie Pie squealed with delight, bouncing about the room like a ping pong ball on steroids.
"Ohboyohboyohboyohboyohboy!Whatwasitlike?!Whensthe wedding?!Willtherebecake?!Howmanyfoals?!OrshouldIs ayeggs?!OhthisISSOEXCIT-!"

"THOU SHALL ALL BE* SILENT*!"

Dead silence.

"Was...that the Royal Canterlot Voice?" Spyro asked in amusement, cocking an eyebrow at the unicorn.

Twilight beamed proudly. "Princess Luna taught it to me during her birthday party." She told him. "Thought it might come in handy." She then shot a deathly glare at her friends; if looks could

kill...well, enough said. "Spyro and I did not do...that! He only offered to keep me company thanks to nightmares from Savagera's story. Nothing else..." She then shot an ever darker glare at Rainbow Dash. "...and put those things away, Rainbow!"

Rainbow Dash quickly snapped out of whatever little fantasy she was thinking of, blushing madly as she struggled to close her erect wings. Pinkie Pie simply stared into space, as if she was still getting over a great disappointment. Rarity was blushing badly, having taken a sudden interest in the nearby wall. Fluttershy had cowered to the floor, trembling slightly as she whimpered behind her hooves. And Applejack was grinning sheepishly at an annoyed Spyro.

"You could see I would do something like that, huh?" He asked, giving her a cross glare.

Applejack swallowed nervously; friend or not, an angry dragon was never something anypony wanted to encounter. "Well, ya *are* a boy an' all..." She offered weakly.

"Unbelievable!" Spyro exclaimed, throwing his wings exasperatingly into the air. "Just because I'm a guy doesn't mean I think of or do that all the time! Venom's the one you're looking for there!" He paused, looking about the room, which was void of all non-pony/dragon life. "Wait...where are the guys anyways?"

"Outside with Sweetie Belle and her friends." Rarity quickly said, glad for a change of subject. "Something about getting cutie marks as Cutie Mark Crusader Landscape Artists."

Outside the Library:

It was an amusing sight for anypony passing by; three little fillies all sitting on stools in front of their own easels, as well as three gigantic monsters known as Neublar, Harry, and Venom sitting behind them with their own stools and easels. All six of them were wearing red berets and all holding art plates full of paint...or holding crayons, markers, pencils, or other modern forms of art tools. Savagera was nowhere in sight, obviously have gone back into the Everfree Forest.

"I don't know about you guys, but I find the painting of the world's beauty to be quite enjoyable." Neublar stated, his tiny brush looking like it could break at any moment in his huge hand.

"Would you keep it down?" Venom, as an Ophionaga, snapped in annoyance. "I'm trying to pour the very passion of my heart and soul into this painting here!"

"Does anyone have any blue crayon left?" Harry asked.

Scootaloo handed the spider said-blue crayon. "Here ya go."

"Thank you." He said, taking the crayon for himself with a claw.

Sweetie Belle sighed in defeat, dropping the paintbrush from mouth as she stared glumly at the splatter mess she called a painting...which was colored similarly to the mess covering herself at

the moment. "I don't think we're getting our cutie marks in painting anytime soon." She admitted, looking glumly down at her blank flank; the only part of her not covered in something.

"I dunno...I think I'm pur'ty good at t'is." Applebloom objected, grinning at her art; it was actually very well done. It was of the scene all of them were suppose to be painting: of a mint-green unicorn mare with similar-colored hair and a beige earth pony mare with blue and pink hair lounging on the distant park bench near the grove; the unicorn was sitting upright in an almost-human position, while the earth pony seemed rather embarrassed by her friend's awkwardness.

Venom paused to look down at the girls from his painting, his long neck allowing him to crane his head around his easel. "So let me get this straight; you three just go around doing completely random things, some of which seem completely crazy to me, until you find one that's your 'special talent', which will get you your 'ECK'...!" He gagged. "...*Cutie Marks*?" He strained out between gritted teeth.

"Yep!" Applebloom said cheerfully. "We haven't found anythin', though." She then admitted. "The other day we tried Skydiving; didn't turn out so well."

"Ouch...talk about hard-core." Venom murmured, going back to his painting.

Harry leaned over to look at Scootaloo's drawing, giving the doodle of a flying Rainbow Dash an odd stare. "Uhmm, you *do* realize we're suppose to be painting those ponies over there, right?" He asked bluntly.

"Hey, I can paint what I want!" The pegasus filly snapped back, causing Harry to fall over with a squeal and a crash.

Neublar looked thoughtful. "Well, if your cutie marks are suppose to be your special talents, perhaps you should focus on things your already good act." He suggested.

"That's what Twilight said!" Sweetie Belle stated. "And it didn't work! That show we put on was a complete bust!"

"Maybe if you actually sucked it up and did what you *knew* you could do, you wouldn't have totaled your act or the stage..." Venom stated flatly, idly skimming the page lightly with his pencil.

"Hey!" Scootaloo snapped angrily.

Any further argument was interrupted by the sound of the library door opening as Spyro exited the tree, followed by Twilight and the rest of the girls, all of the latter carrying their pj's and sleeping bags in the saddle-bags. The purple kirin smirked at the sight before him. "Never took you guys for the artistic type." He stated with a chuckle.

"Just helping the girls with their cutie mark thing." Neublar said nonchalantly. "...aaaaaaaaaand...done!" He announced proudly.

"Done!" Harry echoed soon after.

It took Venom a bit longer than the other two. "A little more on the veins...a bit there...done!" He finished the chorus.

"Alright, let's see them." Twilight stated, turning to Neublar's first; her face lit up at the beautiful water-color portrait of the landscape before them; not a masterpiece worthy of a Reconnaissance era master, but it was brilliant and well done piece of art. "Wow! Neublar, this is great!" She told him joyfully.

"Oh my...it's beautiful...just like a museum's art." Fluttershy exclaimed in her usual whisper-like gentle, her eyes wide and sparkling with innocent fascination.

Neublar blushed sheepishly. "Thanks. I learned a bit about painting back in the Intergalactic Union Academy. I gave it my best shot, but I know it's nothing special." He admitted.

"Are ya kiddin'?" Applejack asked, sharing Twilight awe for the painting. "That's one mighty fine piece of paintin' ya got there! Ya should be dog-gone proud of yerself."

Neublar managed a modest smile.

"Yeah, yeah, very cute..." Venom stated, turning his easel to face the girls. "Now check mine out! Another great masterpiece of art by yours truly..." He declared with over-dramatic though fake flair. "I'll shall call it...*Heartstrings*."

Twilight rolled her eyes before turning to the snake. "Fine. What 'great masterpiece' have you-" She paled at the sight of it, her eyes going wider than dinner plates...as did the rest of the girls', except for Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash, who stared at it with either strange interest or blissful oblivion. Spyro gave it a cocked eyebrow, but inwardly admitted it was an interesting, if not disturbing, piece of art.

"Oh...my..." Fluttershy whimpered, hiding behind Applejack.

"Now that's just *nasty*!" Applejack spat, tongue stuck out in disgust. "What kind'a art is that anyway?"

"It's Dark Art, as if you bright and colorful ponies would know anything about it." The emperor cobra said proudly, arms folded against his chest. "It's very popular amongst us monster types...ya know, people just don't respect the deeper meanings of true art like they use to...even with this kind of art. Oh well, wasn't expecting a positive responses from you ponies anyway. I just felt like painting something dark to counteract all this brightness."

"What about mine?" Harry asked cheerfully, using four legs to hold up his drawing for the ponies to see.

The girls turned to Harry, Twilight in front. "Well, lets se-...uhmmm..." She droned awkwardly. "Harry...why are Lyra and Bonbon *kissing* in your picture?" She asked in an almost deadly tone.

"Because they're Filly Foolers!" Harry cooed cheerfully with a smile, not a care in the world. "At least that's what Pinkie said they were!"

"BWAHAHAHAHAHA!" Venom and Rainbow Dash burst into laughter, the former falling backwards off his seat with a crash. Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy, and Rarity erupted into a crimson blush of shock, glaring afterwards at the pink party pony in question, who grinned sheepishly like a child trying to avoid trouble.

"That reminds me!" The spider then quipped, turning to the still-cackling Rainbow Dash. "I never got to ask my Truth or Dare question! Rainbow, are you a Filly Fooler like Pinkie says you ar-?"

He didn't get to finish before Pinkie Pie, who went bug-eyed in terror, quickly zoomed over to the spider and shoved a hoof into his mouth...before pulling out quickly with a shriek of disgust; there were no words to describe how 'icky' the inside of a tarantula's mouth felt like.

Rainbow Dash immediately stopped laughing, going wide-eyed with shock before snarling in anger. "You two, Pinkie?" She asked in frustration. "No! I am *not*! Why does *everypony* in PonyVille think I am?!"

"Well, you always seemed like one..." Pinkie Pie offered nervously, sweating under her friend's fiery glare.

Spyro frowned in confusion. "What's a Filly Fooler?" He asked Twilight.

"A mare who likes other mares." Twilight stated flatly, smirking a bit at the ranting cyan pegasus. "Known in human terms as a Lesbian."

"Wait, you ponies have homosexuality? I thought that a human-only thing."

"Not only humans do it." Venom stated. "The Slugamos do it, too, remember?"

"Slugamos are hermaphroditic! Doesn't count!" The dragon-pony snapped irritably.

"No, no, ponies aren't like that...well, not normally..." She quickly explained. "It's just one of those universal knowledge things that all races know about; in Equestria, Lesbians are called Filly Foolers and Gays are called Colt Cuddlers, though ponies normally don't have those kinds of flaws."

Spyro still looked confused. "So why...?" He began, looking to Rainbow Dash

"Because I'm not a prancy girly filly like *her*." The rainbow-maned pegasus stated hotly, jabbing a hoof at Rarity, earning an exclamation of distaste from the fashontia. "What, just because I don't go around in frilly skirts or get all pretty and fancy at the spa automatically makes me a filly fooler? Geez!"

"I bet the rainbow mane doesn't help at all." Venom chuckled as he sat up on his elbows.

Rainbow Dash scoffed. "Everypony's just jealous they don't have an awesome mane like mine." She stated coyly...before growling again. "So what if I'm a tomboy? That does not me me gay, so everyone quit saying so!"

"Well, it wouldn't hurt if you showed just a bit of your femininity every now and again." Spyro told her, grinning a bit at her usual hot-heated behavior. "I mean, Applejack can be just as strong and hard-core as you, but at least she looks and acts like a girl at the same time. Heck, if your voice didn't squeak half the time, *I'd* think you were a guy myself. A girly-looking guy, perhaps, but I've seen plenty of those before."

Neublar looked thoughtful. "You know, I'm actually surprised you ponies *don't* have homosexuality." He admitted, earning odd looks from the girls. "I mean, ponies are obviously a female-dominant race, contrary to the male-dominant human and dragon races, thanks to the princesses and population numbers. There are at least ten mares for every one stallion here in Ponyville alone; you can see it for yourself just by looking out there into main square." He motioned out with his hand to the crowd in Main Square; sure enough, Spyro saw that the female ponies outranked male ponies at least ten-to-one. "Maybe this isn't natural for most ponies, seeing how Canterlot had an even amount of genders, but with these odds finding a husband can be difficult for you mares if you don't live in harems or find mates in other species...so I'd think same-sex relationships would be a common thing here thanks to the shortage of males."

"The shortage of stallions is the result of a war long ago." Twilight told them all. "During..."

"Uhmm, Twilight..." Rarity interrupted, leaning in to whisper in her ear. "Do you really *believe* this is a conversation to have in front of the fillies?"

Twilight then noticed, to her surprise, that the Cutie Mark Crusaders had been listening in on their conversation about sex and relationships the entire time, all of them watching with deceptively-innocent expressions...but the lavender unicorn knew better than that; oh Faust, what those three could do with that kind of knowledge for their age! "Don't you think you girls are late for school?" She asked quite suddenly.

This seemed to click into Applejack, Rarity, and Rainbow Dash's brains all at once. "...she's right! What *are* ya'll doin' here, anyway?! Yer'all suppose to be at school!" Applejack snapped angrily.

"Awwwwwwww..." Came the immediate and expected response.

"But, sis! We've gotta find our cutie marks first!" Applebloom objected.

"Yeah! We can't just go and let Diamond Tiara bully us again!" Scootaloo agreed.

"Besides, I'm not done with my drawing!" Sweetie Belle added, still covered in paint.

"I'll hear none of that from you, Sweetie Belle!" Rarity scolded, using her magic to lift and carry the now rainbow-splattered filly up. "Your educations are more important than your cutie marks!" She then turned back to Twilight, still levitating her sister. "I had a *wonderful* time with you all, despite some speed bumpsalong the way." She snarled in Venom's direction; the snake stuck/flicked his black forked tongue at her, creating a combination sound of a snake's hiss and a raspberry. "But besides that, your hospitality was wonderful, but it's time I got back to the Boutique; a *certain somepony* needs a bath before school!" She muttered, staring at the paint dripping from her little sister.

"No! Not a bath too!" Sweetie Belle squealed, trying to fight against her sister's magic, slowly being carried away. "Remember me as who I waaaaassss...!"

Applejack sighed. "Every bit her sister..." She then turned to Applebloom, nudging the young earth filly forward. "Com'on, li'l sis. Time ya got to school and I got back ta the farm."

"Awwwwww..."

"Bye girls." Twilight called, waving goodbye.

Rainbow Dash grabbed Scootaloo gently with her hooves; the orange filly barely had anytime to grab her drawing before her sister and idol set her on her back, preparing for take off. "Ya coming, acid-spitter?" She called to Venom.

Venom transformed back into serpent form. "Yeah, yeah, lemme get-"

"LOOK OUT BELOW!" A gray and blonde pegasus mare cried out before crashing headlong into the trio of easels.

CRASH!

"-MY MASTERPIECE!" Venom shrieked.

Spyro's face turned into one of confused curiosity when he saw the pony sitting in the pile of torn paper and shattered wood, rubbing her head in pain and confusion. She was another pegasus pony, like Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy, about the same age as Twilight and the other girls. Her fur was a light yet dull grey in color, while her mane and tail were a light yet pale-sandy color; both her mane and tail were messy and unkept, styled much like Rainbow Dash's, but was flatter and less tom-boyish. Her eyes were a bright yellow in color, white her cutie mark was a collection of seven bubbles adorning her flank. It was her eyes that puzzled

Spyro; instead of naturally straight, they were naturally crossed, the left pointing slightly upwards while the right pointed slightly downwards. It looked almost painful.

Derpy, after gathering her sense, realized she was surrounded by a bunch of big, scary monsters, one of them being a large purple dragon...and that she had just smashed their belongings. "I-I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" She immediately cried in terror, trembling at the dragon's feet; they all started by her sudden reaction. "I-I didn't mean to b-break your p-paintings! I-I just don't know w-what went wrong! P-Please don't e-eat me!"

"Hey, hey, calm down." Spyro told her, using a paw to lift her out of the mess; the same way he helped Twilight out of the mess on Dragon Mountain. "No one's gonna eat you."

The grey pegasus dared a peek from behind her hooves. "Y-You're not?" She asked in a whimper.

Spyro smirked playfully. "Nah. Ponies are too tough and gamey for my tastes." He stated as he set her down on her hooves; Twilight wasn't sure to be either grateful or insulted.

"Derpy! What the heck are you doing *now*?" Rainbow Dash asked in a scolding tone, flying down to the ground in front of her fellow pegasus.

Derpy looked away with slight shame. "I-I was just delivering Twilight's mail." She said in a worried tone, as if she had done something wrong by mistake. Bending down, she grabbed and lifted a large brown bag out of the mess, slinging the strap back over her neck before rummaging through it, pulling out a...muffin.

"Here you go, Twilight!" Derpy said cheerfully, handing Twilight the muffin in question. "Wow, I didn't think you ordered muffins too! *Everypony* seems to be ordering muffins today!" She then took off, hovering a few feet above them all. "Well, I've gotta go finish my route! Bye, Mr...uhmmm..."

"Spyro."

"Bye, Mr. Spyro!" She said merrily before flying away, leaving a smiling Spyro and a stunned-silent Twilight. The lavender unicorn blinked a few times at the muffin in her hoof before snapping like a twig.

"She grabbed her muffin bag again! That's the second time this month!" She exclaimed in frustration, throwing her muffin to the side...only for it to be caught by Harry, who pulled off an impressive diving catch for it from Pinkie Pie's back; the spider then proceeded to munch merrily on the treat, cooing with delight as he did so.

Rainbow Dash snorted. "What'cha expect? This is *Derpy* we're talking about here!" She stated flatly. "It'd be not normal for her not to do something stupid or goof everything up."

"Or not to strip the world of what true beauty in art it barely had moments to experieeeeeence!" Venom wailed dramatically, bawling over his ruined painting in a Rarity-like fashion.

"Oh, get over it, would you?" Rainbow Dash groaned in frustration.

"Oh, very well..." Venom grumbled, dropping the dramatics as he slithered over to the others.

Neublar eyed the rapidly-shrinking dot of grey with an thoughtful look. "You know, I've seen that pegasus before. Many times, actually, since I got here." He stated. "I think she was also at the party the other day. Doesn't she work for the mail service?"

"Yeah, but I have *no idea* how she keeps her job." Twilight told him. "I mean, you can guess from her eyes alone that she isn't the most coordinated pony in Equestria. With all the mistakes and damage she sometimes causes, I'm surprised they haven't fired her yet."

"More like *all* the time." Rainbow Dash stated with distaste, Scootaloo still riding piggy-back on her. "I've lost track of how many blunders that feather-brain's caused over the years! I'm surprised she hasn't been dragged off to an asylum yet!"

"Rainbow Dash!" Fluttershy scolded. "That's no way to treat your friend! Yes, she may be a bit clumsy, but she means well and you know it!"

Spyro looked concerned. "Why? What's wrong with her eyes?" He asked.

"From what I know, she was born with both a birth defect of her eyes and a mental disorder." The cyan pegasus explained with her fore-hooves crossed, almost in an bored manner. "She's not stupid. Far from it, actually...but it's not her intelligence that's the problem; her sense of balance and direction are effected by her disorder, just like her ability to process thoughts and words. That, combined with her odd vision thanks to her eye condition, makes her really clumsy and accident prone...and the accidents she causes has crowned her the town doofus."

"It isn't fair." Fluttershy said sadly. "She doesn't mean to cause harm; she can't help being clumsy."

"I agree." Spyro stated, staring off in the direction Derpy disappeared from. "She's obviously a nice girl. She just needs a helping hand to guide her."

"And you plan to do this, right? 'Cause I'm not." Rainbow Dash stated flatly as Venom's stripes began glowing as he lifted off the ground. "Venom and I've got jobs to do, and I gotta get Scoots to school. See ya, Twi." And with that, both pegasus and serpent shot off faster than the eye could follow, leaving a rainbow-colored light streak and poison-green mist trail behind them.

Harry watched the whole conversation in silence before he was suddenly grabbed by a pair of stretched hooves, who quickly snap him back to the owner. "I know! I'll throw Derpy a 'we-all-love-you-for-being-a-silly-pony' party!" Pinkie squealed with delight, squeezing her spidery companion to her chest. "Come, Harry! We have a party to prepare."

Harry, who had been gasping for air in her death hug, paused wheezing and stared at her in confusion. "But we just had a slumber party last night, and that was right after Luna's birthday party. Don't you think we should take a break first? It seems a bit early for most ponies to approve of."

Everypony in main square gasped in horror, even Twilight and Fluttershy.

Pinkie Pie herself went stiff, her hair suddenly going straight and flat...and dark; gone was the cheerful laughter that usually filled her eyes. Instead, their was nothing...but rage. Cold, cruel, yet hot, fiery rage.

"*What...did...you...say...*?"

She whirled on the spider, glaring him down against the earth; her face was twisted in a snarl of rage, her eyes burning with a fire to which no mortal creature should ever be exposed too.

"***NO ONE*** disapproves of one of ***MY*** parties!" The demonic mare growled darkly, her angry face smashed against Harry's terror-filled one. "My parties are PERFECT. My parties are to DIE FOR! And I've never failed throwing one yet, and ***YOU*** are ***NOT*** going to ***DISAPPROVE OF THIS ONE!***"

The Tarantully was sweating Niagara falls now. "I-I-I-I-I w-w-w-was j-j-j-just s-s-ug-g-g-ge-!"

"***NO. ONE. DISAPPROVES. OF. MY. PARTIES!***" She roared, the force of her voice creating a crater where the spider laid. "***Understood...?***"

"...Yes...?" Harry squeaked in a tone even quieter than Fluttershy.

"Okie-Dokie-Lokie!" Pinkie Pie suddenly giggled with happiness, her hair poofing up again as she suddenly regained her cheerful demeanor; she scooped up the now-comatose spider, setting him on her head. "Come on, Yon Fuzzy-Face! You can help me make Cupcakes!" She said cheerfully, bouncing away to SugarCube Corner. "I need your help to get the special ingredient!"

"...Help..." Harry called weakly to Spyro, reaching out to the distant dragon in desperation.

Spyro stood there, eye twitching, before he merely sighed, shaking his head in annoyance. "Must be going through her period." He stated flatly.

Twilight gasped, hitting him in the foreleg with her hoof. "Inappropriate!" She snapped.

PonyVille Post Office:

Derpy hummed a pleasant tune as she returned from her first shift, carrying her now-empty bag and hanging it up on the wall. It was odd, though: everypony in town had ordered muffins today!

How strange...though she didn't argue about it; I mean, who *wouldn't* want muffins, right? It was tempting to eat a couple of them, but this grey pegasus is a pegasus of honor! And that means giving everyone their mail on time...even if they all ordered delicious brown muffins...

Of course, it would have helped if they had put their addresses on the muffins. She had to look carefully at each muffin and decide which pony would have ordered a muffin like that; the whole process took twice as long as it should've! The things she goes through to deliver the mail...why, all of Ponyville would fall apart without someone like-

"Derpy Hooves!"

The roar of a voice was one that Derpy knew pretty well; she turned around to see a brown unicorn stallion approaching her, his face set in a stone-hard frown. His mane and tail were both black and cut in a decent, business manner. He also wore a mail-hat, but the uniform that matched it told everyone this was the boss of the whole job, his cutie mark being a package accompanied by two letters.

"Hello, Mister Mailbags, sir!" Derpy said cheerfully, closing her eyes and proudly saluting him, beaming with pride.

But Mr. Mailbags was in no mood for pleasant conversation "Derpy, what is this?" He demanded angrily.

Derpy opened her eyes to see him levitating something in front of her face. It was brown, squished, crumb-covered...

"It's a squashed muffin, sir!"

"Mrs. Truffles found it in her mailbox this morning. She's just returned it to me. You are the only one of our mail-horses scheduled to go by her house today." He said angrily.

Derpy nodded, oblivious to her mistake. "Yup. Is there a problem? 'Cause if she wants me to send it back to the muffin factory, then she's got a problem. That muffin looks delicious, even if it is a bit squashed. And besides..." Ignoring the look of shock on the unicorn's face, she snatched the muffin out of the air and took a bite out of what's left of the crumpled treat. "...she didn't even put a return address on it. Some ponies, I'm tellin' ya."

Just as she is about to reach in for another bite, Mr. Mailbags smacked the mashed muffin away, sending it flying away into a nearby trash can; he then uses his magic to take Derpy by the head, squishing her cheeks a little, and turn her face-to-face with him.

"Derpy, are you listening to me?" He nearly shouted.

"Mmm Hmmm." She murmured, nodding slightly, creating a funny sight between her squished cheeks, crossed eyes, and puffed out lips.

Mr. Mailbags sighed in frustration. "This is the third time this has happened this year; you keep switching up the mail, misplacing it, replacing it with muffins, and there was even that one time that Twilight Sparkle woke up to find her mailbox missing!"

Derpy gasps; this is news to her. "Really? Where was it?" She asked between her squished face.

The post master looked even more cross.

"*You* put it inside of the mayor's mailbox."

The mail mare suddenly remembered the incident, letting out a nervous chuckle. Her eyes betray her worry, though, as they sadden a little. "Oh. Yeah. I...yeah."

Mr. Mailbags released her from his magic grip; she nervously looks at the ground, well aware that she's in for a scolding "What am I going to do with you, Derpy?" He asked sternly. "We can't have this kind of stuff keep happening. Do you do realize how costly it can be if you mess up at just the right time? Why, if someone were to have spent all day or even all their life working on a project of some sort and they mess up just one little step, then the entire thing falls apart! All because of one little mistake. All that progress. Gone. Just like-" He sighed in frustration. "Derpy, I'm sorry. But this just can't go on any longer."

Derpy looked at him in fear. What was he going to do? Was she going to be grounded from muffins for a month?! She whimpered at the thought. Her boss scowled at her and, straightening up, pronounces her deathly punishment.

"You're fired."

...

...Fired? But not grounded from muffins?

...Fired?

...

...That's all?

...

...Huh...

...

Oh no!

"No! Please, Mister Mailbags, sir! Please don't!" Derpy cried. "This is my life! It's my talent! It's my special gift! See?" The distressed pegasus shoved her butt up into the air, gesturing at her cutie mark: several various-sized bubbles.

"What do bubbles have to do with delivering mail, Derpy?" Mailbag's asked, cocking an eyebrow. Derpy quickly sits back down, a little embarrassed. "I'm sorry, but we've been over this before many times: your clumsiness is too much of a trouble. It's causing problems day after day after day, and we simply can't take any more damage. My patience for your antics is at its end."

Unable to take it anymore, Derpy fell to the ground, tears already filling her eyes, the fear of the future caving her in. "B-But this is the only job I have! How else am I going to earn money? This is the only one that will take me! The Cakes say my cooking gives people food poisoning, the newspaper says I'm too messy with ink, and the lumber mill just won't hire me! You gotta let me stay! And besides, I have-!"

"I'm sorry, Derpy, but I've made up my mind." The stern unicorn interrupted. "I'll give you until noon to pack your bags and turn in your hat."

Golden Oaks Library:

"Remind me again how many times I helped clean up the library since I got here?" Spyro, in kirin form, asked flatly before using his magic to grab the lid of Twilight's trash can, lifting it off. Spike shrugged, dumping his dust-pan's contents of pillow feathers and snack food crumbs into the can, his broom clutched tightly in the other hand. The two dragons (well, dragon and dragon-turned-kirin) had spent the rest of the morning cleaning up the mess made from the slumber party.

"I've already lost count of how many times the library's been a mess, and we've only lived here a little more than a year." Spike told his as they headed back inside the now-clean library. "At least there aren't as many books as there are in the Royal Library; less books mean less mess."

"Oh, ha, ha, ha." Twilight stated sarcastically as she looked up from the work on the center table, her levitating quill scribbling away quickly on the paper in front of her. "I'll let you know that these messes are all made in purpose and honor to the princesses themselves!"

Spike scoffed. "Yeah, such as the honor and purpose you had putting a Want-It, Need-It Spell on your doll." He chuckled, arms folded.

"That had it's purpose as well!" Twilight snapped, blushing madly. "You'd do it too if it meant not going back to *Magic Kindergarten*!"

Spyro chuckled at the two, taking a seat at the center table, to the left of Twilight. "So, *why* do mares outnumber stallions again?" He asked.

"Huh?" The lavender unicorn asked in confusion.

"Mares outnumbering stallions." the kirin repeated. "You said it had something to do with a war before we stopped talking about it."

Twilight frowned in confusion before she perked up. "Oh, that!" She said in remembrance.

Spike waved a claw. "Meh, you guys go ahead. I'm gonna get some grub at SugarCube Corner." He stated, heading to the door. "See ya."

"Bye, Spike! Be careful out there!" Twilight called to him, moments before the library door shut. She then turned back to Spyro, who was smirking slightly at Twilight's maternal worry for the baby dragon. "Right...it was the War of Unicornia that caused the inbalance between genders, though most ponies call it the War of Sexual Dominance because of the results. You see, during the reign of Discord and before that, the three races still lived in separate 'sub-kingdoms', though they still lived in alliance...until the unicorn dictator Adolf Hoofler came to power."

Spyro recoiled in surprise. "*Adolf Hitler*?! The human dictator of Germany that started World War II of Original Earth?!" He asked, recalling one of the last remaining pieces of knowledge of the 'Real World' remaining.

Twilight shook her head. "No, no. Adolf *Hoofler*." She correction him. "The great grandson of Princess Platinum; fourth and final ruler of Unicornia before Celestia's complete-power ascension." Her horn glowed as she levitated a book from the shelf over to the dragon-pony, who took it and read the title: *Wars of Equestria...*which was, oddly, a rather small book compared to others. He opened it with his hooves and used his magic to flip through the pages until Twilight stopped him on one page, which held drawings of the War of Unicornia.

One such picture was that of a unicorn stallion...though he could've been mistaken it for a colt if you didn't know better. The stallion's size was around the same of a mare's, both in height and build; short and scrawny, in Spyro's opinion. His horn, however, was slightly longer and much sharper looking than most horns, but that didn't change the pony's overall ridiculous appearance much. His fur was a bright blood-red in color, his eyes being dark blue in color, like Princess Platinum's...and Rarity's...while his mane was blackish-brown in color, shortly cut and trimmed to match Hitler's hairstyle, his tail matching his mane; he even had the same tiny little strip of a mustache just under his nose. He wore a uniform more like that of a battle king than a German dictator, and his cutie mark was the same spider symbol that marked many-a-flag during the greatest war of mankind.

Spyro couldn't stop the hysterical snickers from escaping. *'Oh, Ancestors, the pony version looks even more ridiculous than the human version!"* He mentally cackled.

Twilight frowned. "It's not funny, Spyro. *Thousands* of ponies died in that war!" She scolded.

Spyro stopped laughing, mentally and physically. "Sorry." He muttered. "Please continue."

Twilight's frown softened into a look of understanding, the lavender mare pointing at the pictures once more. "While the other leaders' descendants accepted Princess Celestia as the over-all ruler of Equestria, Hoofler did not. He believed that unicorns were the dominant pony species, being the only ponies able to use magic, and the only species that could control the sun; he also believed that males were the dominant sex, as it was with humans and is with dragons."

"Until Princess Celestia came along and stole the sun from them." Spyro added for her.

"Well, I wouldn't say steal..." Twilight stated, slightly offended. "...more like...taking back what was always destined to be hers, putting it back in hooves that knew how to properly wield it. Adolf Hoofler hated her for both reasons, refusing to both a mare and a pony higher than the unicorns rule over him and use the power that he believed was rightly *his alone*." She shook her head at his foolishness. "So, while Princess Celestia and Luna went to battle against Discord, Unicornia declared war on Pegasopolis and Earth, rallying every unicorn stallion he could find. It was horrible; the unicorn-only armies would take the cities and villages one by one and completely slaughter them, of earth pony, pegasi, and any unicorn not willing to join his cause...Every stallion in the villages were killed while the mares were imprisoned and used as...'soldier producers': to 'breed' more soldiers for the armies. All unicorn colts were taken into training while any fillies or non-unicorn colts were...killed."

Spyro was dumb-founded, his mouth hanging agape in shock. By the ancestors...

"It was Tartarus at its finest."

Both unicorn and kirin nearly jumped out of their skin, whirling around to see the owner of the voice standing before them.

"P-P-Princess Celestia?!" Twilight cried in disbelief. "H-How long have you been here?!"

"Long enough." Celestia said solemnly; the look on the alicorn's face was that of one who had seen the monstrous acts of war and death they were talking about and lived to tell the tale: pain, sadness, anger...but most of all, regret. Regret of not being able to stop it before it happened.

But before Spyro could say a word, Twilight galloped around the room, her horn glowing as she hurriedly cleaned the library with a feather duster. "Princess, you should've told me you were coming! I would've cleaned the library! I would've organized a dinner at SugarCube Corner! I would've-!"

The unicorn's panic was interrupted when she was engulfed in a golden aura or magic and lifted off the ground; Celestia then turned her around to face her, offering her frazzled student a gentle, reassuring smile.

"Please calm down, Twilight. There's no reason to get yourself so worked up." She said soothingly.

"But-!"

"This is a causal visit, Twilight. I'm merely Dropping In (TM)..." She giggled a bit as she set her student gently back on the floor. "...and I apologize for not telling you in advance. Still, if I had, you would've gotten the entire town to decorate for my arrival, and I don't want that this afternoon."

Twilight sighed in defeat, bowing her head. "Of course, Princess...but at least let me offer you something to eat; Spyro and I were about to have lunch with our history lesson." She told her mentor, grinning.

"We were?"

"*Yesssss!*" She droned out through gritted teeth.

"I appreciate the offer, my faithful student, but I'm not hungry at the moment." Princess Celestia told her, laying herself down next to the smaller pony. "But please, don't let me stop you. You were telling a story, I believe?"

Spyro nodded. "You were *there*, weren't you?" He asked softly. "During the war, I mean."

Celestia nodded, her motherly smile fading back to that regretful face; one that made Spyro feel sorry for the immortal sun goddess. "Yes...and I saw every little bit of Hoofler's cruelty." She told him, her voice heavy with longing. "He attacked my subjects while my sister and I were helpless against the might of Discord. Thank my mother Faust we returned before it was too late; Canterlot, which was merely the Palace of the Alicorns at the time, was where all who survived his attacks or had yet to be attacked fled to for safety. My own army was able to drive the attacking army back, and then Luna and I brought forth the justice everyone had long been waiting for."

Spyro grinned slightly yet darkly; he was going to enjoy this part.

"My sister and her bat ponies rescued the mare hostages from Unicornia, returning them to safety in Canterlot...and then..." She fell silent, that longing becoming even stronger.

"Then what?" Spyro asked.

"...I summoned the power of the sun to smite Unicornia and Hoofler's entire army off the map."

Twilight recoiled in shock, her entire life before her shattered.

Celestia sighed heavily, her crown suddenly a great burden on her shoulders; she reached a hoof out and brought her student into a hug, if not for the unicorn's sake then for her own. "...after that, my sister and I decided that middle-management would only lead to more wars...and more death, so we removed all power from the three separate kingdoms and assume complete control over Equestria, and aside from Nightmare Moon, there hasn't been a war in Equestria since." She then told Spyro, still hugging Twilight.

Spyro cocked an eyebrow. "*Complete and utter control*?" He asked. "Sounds a bit like dictatorship itself, no offense."

Twilight honestly expected Celestia to blow up in anger on him, but to her surprise the alicorn nodded. "It does, and some near-sighted ponies would agree with you, hence those who believe me to be a cruel tyrant: 'Tyrantlestia' or 'Trollestia', as they call me...but this is for their own good; My father worked and fought hard to bring forth the paradise Equestria has become, and to prevent us from joining mankind in self-destruction, regardless of what some ponies believe of us. My sister and I were *chosen by fate* to protect the paradise he brought, and will do so whether others agree with us or not; I believed it was foolish of our parents to allow them to govern themselves in the first place."

The purple kirin nodded in agreement. "Indeed." He told her. "And I believe that Unicornia also serves as a warning to any others who try to defy you, right?" He asked, motioning with his wing.

"It is *not* a warning for those who try to defy my orders and laws." The sun goddess stated as she set Twilight back down, frowning a bit. "It is a warning for those who threaten my home and family, related or otherwise."

There was a moment's silence of thought, before Spyro actually chuckled aloud. "Well, this has been weird. What started as a question to why there are more girl ponies than boy ponies became a full-blown history and politics lesson." He said with a grin.

Celestia sighed at the dragon's childish statement, but smiled all the same. "Yes, that's why mares outnumber stallions; with the destruction of Hoofler and his army, the male population plummeted; for a time ponies adopted the habit of forming harems until the population returned to normal standards...but even today, with the population higher than ever in Equestrian History, the male population has yet to regain equal numbers with females...and at this rate, they probably never will."

"It's probably for the best, and it's fine by me." Spyro admitted, grinning suggestively. "I don't mind being *overrun by girls*..."

Celestia giggled. "Well, as charming and handsome as you are..." She told him fondly...before turning deathly serious. "...I didn't come here for pleasantries. There is a matter of great importance I must discuss with both of you."

Spyro's grin faded, his face slowly turning into one of realization. "...does it have something to do with the Prehistorian Monsters appearing everywhere?" He asked with concern.

The princess's horn suddenly glowed, and the entire tree lit up with a golden aura; the glow soon faded, a few lingering sparkles fading away around them. It was a spell Twilight recognized immediately, having seen her mentor use it before: a spell that blocked sound, which meant that what the princess wanted to talk about wasn't meant to be heard by *anyone else*.

"It is." Celestia told him. "...the portals of Prehistoria are opening in the Everfree Forest."

Twilight looked slightly confused, but Spyro's eyes widened in shock. "But...but that's impossible! Prehistoria has never been connected to Equestria! I know; Ignitus said so!"

"No, Spyro. Even Ignitus wouldn't know that for sure; even he hasn't lived long enough to know that. Besides, how else could there be a portal from Skylands to Equestria for the dragons to use if the mainland planet hadn't been connected to it once?" Celestia told him. "Prehistoria has been connected to this world before, long before the founding of Equestria...by the Snakeasaurus itself."

The look of horror that shot through Spyro's eyes made Twilight shudder.

"How...how do you know about the Snakeasaurus?" The kirin asked; the fear in his voice, while controlled, was obviously clear.

"The beast entered Equestria once before, during the reign of my father." The alicorn explained. "And, as you may know, Spyro, the portals it creates to get here have remained existent since, just closed...but now they have started to open again-"

"-'leaving Equestria completely exposed to the death and darkness that is Prehistoria'." Spyro quoted, rubbing his wrist against his chin in thought. "Yes, I know how it works."

"Uhmmm...I'm rather confused here...if you two don't mind?" Twilight said softly, still shaken.

"You know the monsters from my world that have been seen in the Everfree Forest?" Spyro asked; the lavender unicorn nodded. "The portals they are coming from are called Anomalies, and they are created by Tyrone the Snakeasaurus...the same monster that destroyed my home world, as I've told you before." He told her, to which she nodded again, but with pity. "He jumps from Prehistoria to other worlds by creating these anomalies; basically 'tunnels' through time and space which he...and any creature that comes across them...can pass through to move from one location to another, even from one world to another. Normally he controls when they open and close, but they have been known to open and close on their own at random times, but still in the same places he created them."

It slowly began to dawn on Twilight, her eyes widening slowly in realization. "...and there opening now in the Everfree Forest, after all this time, allowing creatures from Prehistoria to come here to Equestria."

Celestia frowned, nodding in agreement. "Those monsters are entering my world and already are destroying my cities and killing my subjects at will." She said sternly. "Sightings and causalities alike are being reported from all the cities near the Everfree: Lag Pegasus, Fillydelphia, Manehatten...and even here in PonyVille."

Twilight's heart leapt into her throat. "W-What?!" She cried in terror. "N-No! That can't be true! Apart from Spyro and his friends, I haven't seen any monsters yet!"

"That's because all the attacks have been at night...so far." Celestia told her panicking student. "Of PonyVille, we've already confirmed three deaths, one of them being the professor Time Turner."

"Time Turner?" Spyro asked, looking confused. "Isn't that the guy everypony keeps calling Dr. Whooves?"

The lavender unicorn went stiff, a calm shock filling her eyes; she slumped to the ground, staring into space with disbelief. "No...dear old Dr. Whooves?" She whispered; she had admired the professor for his amazing theories on Time-Space Continuum since her time in Canterlot... "It...can't be...I had just attended one of his seminars last month, just before the dragon migration..."

"His body was found half-digested in a pile of what my experts have concluded to be serpent vomit." The sun goddess told her student in a gentle tone, before turning to Spyro with a more serious face. "My soldiers are doing what they can to set up defenses in the nearby cities the best they can, but I need more help."

"You want the Skylanders help you fight the monsters, right?" He asked, almost emotionlessly.

Celestia gazed at him pleadingly, yet in a strong but gentle, motherly way. "You are the Legendary Purple Dragon, the strongest warrior in all the Fantasy Realm...and the leader of the Skylanders, the greatest warriors of Skylands; you and your companions are, without a doubt, our best hope for surviving this attack. This is not connected to your magic lessons, nor did I know of the Anomalies arrival, so do not assume I only brought you here to protect us: on behalf of Equestria...and as your friend...I ask of you. Will you help us?" She asked.

Spyro stared at her for a few seconds, then he glanced at Twilight; if he wasn't already willing with the alicorn's plea, then the big, pleading eyes of the lavender unicorn would do the job by themselves.

He smiled, shaking his head at himself for falling for those big eyes...

"Of course we will."

Celestia smiled. "Thank you, young dragon." She told him, gratitude filling her voice. "But for now, I have a more important job for you two..."

PonyVille, Everfree Outskirts, a half-hour later:

Spyro and Twilight looked on in interest with Celestia at the construction of a great wall being built between Ponyville and the Everfree Forest. Celestia herself had ordered the construction of the wall to keep Ponyville safe from the new dangers of the dark fores; each city and major settlement near the forest were having their own walls constructed as well, though PonyVille's

was being built extra fast and strong to protect the element wielders living there, according to the plans, the wall was going to be over three stories high, ten feet thick, five feet through into the earth for support, and built with support beams of wood and interlocking strength beams of iron, the interior filled with cement. As they watched, a crew of well over two hundred construction ponies slaved away to erect the beginnings of the wooden skeletal structure near the north-west edge of Ponyville. It was, by Equestrian standards, an impenetrable stronghold...

...and by Prehistorian standards...a picket fence.

"You do realize this isn't gonna work by a long shot, right?" Spyro asked flatly, looking less than impressed at the construction before him.

Celestia frowned in disapproval. "These blueprints were created by my finest engineers and construction designers." She exclaimed, motioning to the blueprints spread across the table in front of them. "Five feet of solid stone-and-cement, interlocking beams of iron for impact and durability, three stories high, covering the entire eastern outskirts of PonyVille. Proven to withstand the force of a charging Ursa Minor."

The purple kirin snorted. "Yeah, good for keeping out the small, flightless critters." He stated flatly, earning a small frown from Twilight. "I'm sorry, Princess, but it's the truth; any Prehistorian creature too small to step over the wall can either fly or jump over, crawl over, dig underneath, or plain smash through it."

"That's why I need your help. Is there anything we can do to improve it?"

Spyro stared at the designs thoughtfully, rubbing his chin with his right hoof, humming in thought. "Well...first off you could smooth the wall's sides to a sleek, perfectly-flat surface..." He told her, pointing to the picture of the wall. "...and have ponies constantly keep it moist; that would keep out flightless insects and other creatures capable of climbing walls...as for smashing through, wield a large, sharp spike facing the forest to the wall every two yards; this will discourage creatures from charging headlong into it. As for flying animals...well...I suggest torches along the wall every ten feet; the flames will discourage smaller fliers. Anything too big and powerful for the wall, we'll deal with."

Celestia turned to the construction head-worker; a heavily-built brown earth pony in a construction worker's uniform and with a hard hat cutie mark. "Well, you heard him; add and begin his suggestions to the plans immediately." She told him, levitating the blueprints to him.

"Yes, your highness." The pony said gruffly, bowing slightly, before turning to his workers. "You heard the princess! Get to work!"

Spyro merely stood there and watch as the princess and the workers headed down to the site, discussing between themselves about the blueprints. "What do you think the wall will be like, Twilight?" Spyro asked, turning to the unicorn next to him...who didn't answer. "Twilight? Hey!"

"Ah! What...oh, sorry, Spyro. I was just thinking." She muttered halfheartedly.

Spyro didn't miss the look on her face; that sad, perhaps even shaken look of deep thought, and that longing in her eyes. "Okay, I'll bite. What's wrong?" He asked with concern.

"Nothing. Just thinking..." Twilight muttered.

But Spyro wasn't buying it; the kirin moved in front of her, using his magic to lift her chin up, bringing her gaze to meet his own. "Twi...I've barely known you for three weeks, but I can already tell when something's bothering you." He said sternly, but not without gentleness. "Come on, now. What's up?"

Twilight stared at him for a moment...and then sighed. "Our talk with the princess earlier." She said glumly, turning her gaze back to the Everfree. "I just found out that the pony I admire and look up too is a battle-scarred warrior who destroyed an entire nation. I thought I really knew the princess after *all this time*...but I guess nopony could ever *truly* know Celestia."

Spyro frowned. "You can't blame her for what she did." He told her. "She had no choice; she had to do it."

"No! She didn't!" Twilight snapped, whirling furiously on the surprised kirin. "There had to have been another way! Diplomatic Resolve, City-Wide Capture, *anything*! She didn't have to go and murder the lives of *thousands* of other ponies!"

"Yes, she *did*!" Spyro snarled back, glaring at the unicorn. "By the time she and Luna defeated Discord and return, Hoolfer was on Canterlot's doorstep! There was nothing else she could've done!" He closed his eyes, taking a deep breath to calm himself. "She did what she had too, and you have no right to judge her for it."

Twilight only gaped at him, unable to believe him.

"How...how can you be so *heartless*?! She *murdered* those ponies! She *killed* innocent lives! There were *innocent ponies* in that kingdom; most of those soldiers had *families* in Canterlot! And you're *supporting* her?!"

"Of course I am! You have *no idea* what war forces people to do; Celestia knows this as much as I do!"

"Don't talk about Celestia like you know her!" The unicorn screamed at him, tears beginning to fall from her eyes as she grabbed the dragon pony by the shoulders. "I know the princess more than anyone in all of Equestria! She's the pony I've loved and looked up to practically my whole life! The one who taught me the value of life and mercy a-and compassion and-" The purple unicorn started to shake, sweat and tears caking the fur on her face. "She was the pony I idolized! The pony I held up on a pedestal of perfection, only to learn that she's a blood-spilling warlord! And you can't do *anything* to change that...*anything*! You can only learn about it after it happens! Do you have any idea how much this is tearing me up inside?!"

Spyro was utterly confused, as well as worried. "Why is this such a big shock to you?" He asked. "Isn't that how the story normally goes?"

"No!" Twilight shouted, the tears now pouring down the sides of her face. "That wasn't the ending everypony knows; it was supposed to be that Hoofler and his army fled from Equestria itself and were never heard from again! Most ponies don't even know that Hoofler captured females like that and killed so many ponies so brutally; *I* only know it from the original documents in the Private Royal Library!"

Spyro blinked in surprise.

"And now it's happening again!" She continued to sob, her body shaking in terror. "Those monsters coming from your world are killing ponies on a whim! Another war is coming, o-one that's possibly going to be worse than any war before! More ponies are gonna die! Celestia is going to have to kill again! My brother and his army are going to have to actually fight! And *kill*! And...and...I DON'T WANNA DIE-HI-HIIIIIIIIIII!"

She finally broke and threw herself at the kirin pony, clinging to him as if her life depended on it. Spyro recoiled in utter shock, slowly putting his arms around her; the pony in his arms was deathly terrified, sobbing loudly as she trembled uncontrollably against him, tears spilling from her squeezed-shut eyes. The sobs and whimpers coming from her lips tore at his heart, the scales on his chest glimmering from being soaked by her sorrow.

He felt a presence beside him; he looked up to see Celestia standing next to him, gazing down on the mare in the kirin's embrace in pity, sorrow, and regret.

"I'm afraid this is my doing..." She said softly, her calm, authoritative aura wavering at the sight of her beloved student bawling her eyes out in terror. "...after the War of the Sun and Moon, I did everything I could to completely erase the concepts of war, battle, and such from Equestria entirely; I felt that reminders and stories of the previous wars in their true horror would only encourage darker hearts to engage in them, and thus destroy the Eden we alicorns worked so hard to create...but now I fear that decision was a foolish one."

"Of course it was." Spyro stated with a tone of bitterness in his voice, his wings wrapping around the mare in his forearms. "You've blinded your subjects with sugar-coated fantasies to the point that they shatter when exposed to true darkness. How are they suppose to even defend themselves if they can't even face the idea of there being such things as death and war?"

"I never expected Equestria or my subjects to ever need a true grip on reality!" Celestia stammered, surprised by the dragon's suddenly aggression. "My world and subjects had been sealed off from the rest of the worlds completely! There was no need to poison their minds with dark thoughts and beliefs that would only cause evil to brew within themselves!"

The purple kirin scoffed. "Well, little good that does us now when the most dangerous and darkest world in all of existence *smashes* through your 'seals' and threatens to consume a completely defenseless world." He said bitterly, standing up; he levitated an exhausted Twilight

onto his back, who merely shook with quiet sniffles as she snuggled sadly into his spinal mane. "Perhaps that's the reason Prehistoria is attacking Equestria: to pound some sense of reality back into everypony's thick heads before this world collapses in on itself."

"Even with thousands of innocent lives destroyed as the price?!"

"If you hadn't drowned your own kingdom in innocence already, then there wouldn't have to *be* a price to begin with!"

"Enough!" Celestia snapped, her wings snapping outward in that silencing motion. "I see your point, but this conversation is getting us nowhere! I know that it wasn't the wisest of decisions, but what am I suppose to do now?!"

Spyro's glare softened a touch, but remained on his face. "Pure intentions or not, this world is now in jeopardy. If you want to make sure it's standing after this invasion, I suggest you stop trying to pretend this isn't happening and actually stand up and fight!" He then turned away from her, carrying Twilight on his back as he headed back down the hill. "Go back to Canterlot, tell all of Equestria what's *really* going on, and prepare your armies for the battle to come..."

He glanced back, his eyes steeled with dark determination.

"...as of now...Equestria *is* at *War* with Prehistoria."

Golden Oaks Library:

The glare of steely darkness had long left the now-dragon Spyro's eyes as he ducked carefully through the door of the library, the exhausted form of Twilight laying motionless on his back. Now the purple saurian's gaze was weary and down-cast, the weight of responsibility weighing heavily on his shoulders...in the form of the Element of Magic; Equestria's only true defense from...the very world his kind called home.

'Why did I have to be born of the world brings so much death to these beautiful worlds?' Spyro thought bitterly, his eyes focused on the floor. *'Despite the flaws, Celestia's ideas do make sense if there's no fear from outside interference...so why? Why can't they just leave this world alone?"*

He made his way up the steps, carefully though, thanks to the pony on his back, to see Spike dusting off the shelves and furniture with a feather duster, cleaning up the last remaining bits of the slumber party. The baby dragon noticed his arrival immediately. "Hey, Spyro! Where've you-...Whoa! What's wrong with Twilight?" He asked worryingly.

"She's fine." Spyro assured him softly. "She just had a scare earlier today; she'll be okay once she gets some rest."

"Okay..." Spike said warily, watching them both with concern as Spyro climbed up to where Twilight's bed was, using his magic to lift the unicorn off his back and place her in her bed, resting her head on her pillow; Twilight stirred and weakly opened her eyes as the dark-blue glow faded, looking over to see the dragon setting the saddle-bags next to the head of her bed.

"Spyro...?" She asked weakly.

Spyro didn't think she was awake, but if he was surprised he hid it well. "Yes?"

"Do...do *you* fight in wars?" Twilight asked softly, as if she would fall asleep any moment. "I mean...you live in Prehistoria...do you have to fight like that?"

It was such a question if such an obvious answer in his world that no one ever asked him...but to hear it for the first time...and from such an innocent mind and pure heart...

He suddenly felt very ugly.

"Yes. I fight battles against enemies all the time..." He told her, casting his shamed gaze to the floor. "As a dragon, fighting is a common occurrence in my life...and as the purple dragon, the whole of Skylands, Starina, and now Equestria, depends on me and my friends for safety and peace. That's why we fight Wars, and take the drastic measures they call for: I have fought...and killed...thousands of enemies, and will destroy countless more in the future to insure those I care for can live in peace one day."

Twilight sighed heavily, her eyes dropping. "I'm sorry I called you heartless before..." She murmured. "...I was scared...but I feel better...knowing you...and your friends...are gonna help us."

Spyro looked up from the floor just in time to see her eyelids close, her mind slipping into much needed subconsciousness; the dragon smiled fondly as he used his magic again, this time to pull the blankets over Twilight's sleep form.

"Don't worry." He told her. "I've got your back."

"Ugh! Get a room already!" He heard Spike exclaimed with disgust.

Spyro scowled, not amused at all. "Is that so? *Fifty* Push-Ups this time! Get to it!" He snapped, bounding down and landing on the floor without a sound.

The baby dragon's jaw dropped. "What?! What'd I do?!"

"Mouthed off to your superiors, that's what." Spyro stated flatly, walking past him in a high-and-mighty attitude, mocking the baby dragon. "Now get to it! And don't wake up Twilight doing so." And with that, the purple dragon exited the library through the balcony window, taking off into the air, leaving an huffy Spike once more straining himself to exhaustion on the floor...

...but Spyro didn't get ten feet from the Library before a nearby sound reached his ears:

Sobbing. Quiet and soft yet utterly heartbroken sobbing.

His draconian ears swiveled about like a bat's would, searching for the source of the noise. He soon spotted the location the sound was coming from; a small, lone cloud hovering above the library; squinting carefully, Spyro spotted a familiar-looking sandy-blonde tail hanging out of the cloud, along with the occasional drop of rain...a single drop of water every five seconds...dripping from the cloud's puffy mass. Frowning in concern, he quickly flapped with massive wings a few times to reach the cloud, landing on top of it in a perching fashion; the sobbing inside stopped, a squeak of fear coming from inside just before he used his claws to tear away at the puff of clouds he sat on to reveal...

"Derpy?"

Derpy nearly screamed in terror when she saw the dragon, but she relaxed once she realized who it was. The mare's walled eyes were red and puffy from crying, the fur of her cheeks soaked and matted with tears. It looked as if she had been crying for a long time.

"O-Oh...H-Hi, S-Spyro." She sniffed, wiping at her face with her hooves.

Spyro frowned in concern. "Are you okay, Derpy?" He asked, although it was a stupid question; obviously she wasn't okay! "What's going on? What happened?"

"...I-I...I got f-fired from my j-job today..." The pegasus whimpered, her voice close to breaking.

Spyro blinked in surprise; Twilight was just talking about that earlier that day. "I'm sorry to hear that." He said truthfully. "...was...was it because of the muffins?"

Derpy sobbed a gasping breath, nodding.

"I thought so..."

"W-What am I gonna do?!" Derpy wailed, her eyes full of desperation and sorrow. "N-N-No other j-job in t-town w-will take m-me! I-I have a-a-a f-filly t-to f-feed and e-educate! I-I-I don't k-k-know w-w-what t-to do-ho-hoooo!"

For a second time that day, Spyro found an utterly-crushed mare in his arms; he gazed down on poor Derpy with eyes full of pity; what *was* she going to do? The only job in town that had taken her kicked her out, finally being fed up with her mess-ups.

"Hey, now...calm down. It's going to be okay." He whispered, gently rubbing her back to soothe her; her sobs slowly died down to soft sniffles, her arms still hugging the dragon's neck in a death-grip.

"But...but how are we gonna live?" Derpy hiccuped, tears running afresh down her face. "I'm barely making ends meet as it is! I can barely get enough food to fill our bellies, and now we have nothing!"

Spyro stared at Derpy for what seemed like an eternity to both of them...until finally, after a few minutes, he turned his gaze to the library, his horns glowing dark blue; there was movement in the upper floor for about half a minute, something inside going back and forth...and soon the upper-story window to the library opened and a brown bag the size and shape of a basketball floated outwards, suspended in Spyro's magical grasp, hovering over to be released from the magic and land in the dragon's claws.

The purple saurian then opened the bags, revealing it's contents...which made Derpy's eyes widened in pure disbelief.

"Gold coins; not cheap bits, but the real stuff..." Spyro told her, taking one coin out and holding it up for her to see. "...straight from the sunken wreckage near the Kingdom of Atlantica. The type of currency may be non-existent here, but the gold will be worth enough to keep you and-"

"No."

"Excuse me?"

"No." Derpy repeated, pushing the coin and Spyro's hand away from her. "I can't take it. It's *your* treasure, Mr. Spyro; I can't just take it from you."

Spyro, however, wasn't about to take no for an answer. "Derpy, you're not taking the gold; I'm *giving* it to you. With this money, you and your daughter will be set for more than a year." He told her, handing the bag back to her.

"Stop."

"Think of what you could do for your filly with all this."

"Please...stop..."

"It'd be more than enough to keep you happy until-"

"STOP IT! PLEASE, DON'T DO THIS TO ME!" The pegasus finally screamed, shoving the dragon's gift away from her; it was only then Spyro realized she wasn't objecting...but begging. "It's not mine to take! I didn't earn it; I know you want to help, but this is wrong! I...I can't just sit around and make you take care of us when I'm suppose to be doing that myself! I-I just can't!"

She then collapsed onto the cloud, once again breaking into uncontrollable sobs.

Spyro stared at her in complete shock. *'She's on the verge of starvation and home loss, and yet she follows her heart and refuses the idea of stealing from others...'* He thought to himself.

"Derpy, look at me. *Look at me*." He then said sternly, his tail coming around and the arrow-tip coming up to cup her chin, turning her tear-soaked face up to him. She sniffled, rubbing her eyes with her hoof before looking up at him, her mismatched eyes focusing on his reptilian ones. "You're not making me work for you or stealing from me. I'm *giving* this to you. You need

money if not to support yourself, then to support your daughter; how else are you going to see she has food and a place to sleep if you can't afford for her anymore?"

Derpy glanced away with worry.

"I know you mean well, but you can't afford to say no." Spyro continued; he took her small forehooves in his large hand, using his other hand to drop the bag of gold into her hooves. "So, as a *friend*...accept this gift for your daughter's sake if not your own."

Silence.

Derpy could only stare at the bag in her hooves in silence, and then up at Spyro, her eyes wide with awe. This dragon barely knew her; heck, first impressions they had earlier that day show her to be an even bigger klutz than she normally was...and yet, despite not even knowing her truly, was willing to freely give her a gift that would undoubtedly save her and Dinky's lives...all out of the kindness in his heart.

Tears once more came to her eyes, but this time they were tears of great joy...and gratitude.

"Thank you..." She whimpered softly, hiccuping new sobs as the tears flowed down her face. "...Thank you *so much*..."

Before Spyro could even react, the grey mare threw herself at him, locking her arms and wings around his neck; she clung to him tightly, quietly sobbing 'thank you' over and over again. Spyro stared at the pony against his chest for a moment...before wrapping his own wings around her shivering body, smiling with a gentle warmth of fondness.

"You're welcome." Was all he needed to say.

PonyVille Schoolhouse:

Halfway across town, located next to the path that led to sweet apple acres, was PonyVille's Schoolhouse. The building was red and decorated with festive hearts; even the weather vane on the top of the bell tower featured a heart, looking almost like Cupid's arrow. A playground was visible out behind the building, while in front was a flagpole and a hedge sculpture of a pony wearing a square, flat-topped hat with a tassel. A welcoming sight to most young ponies in the community, and a place of fond memories to many of PonyVille's residents. A place of learning, where ponies studied for a bright future and made good friends.

The PonyVille Elementary School house, where the mulberry-colored earth pony Cheerilee granted the gift of knowledge to her students. It was at this very school were the Cutie Mark Crusaders went to learn for their future.

There was also another blank-flanked filly that attended this cheerful school, who was currently sitting on the steps of the school, reading one of the school's picture book. She was the same age and size as the CMC's members, being a unicorn filly like Sweetie Belle; her fur was a pale lavender-grey, while her mane and tail shared the same sandy-blonde and messy style color as her mother, though her coloring was slightly sharper in tone. Her eyes were the same color as her mother, though they were normal instead of walled.

Her name was Dinky Doo, Daughter of Derpy Hooves.

Smiling happily as she her eyes skimmed across the beautiful pictures in the book, she didn't see two of her classmates approaching her until they were just a few feet from her.

"Hey, Dinks." One of them sneered; it was a voice that Dinky despised, but she pretended not to hear, flat-out ignoring the voice as she continued to read. "Hey! Lamehorn!" The voice said again, this time louder; Dinky continued to ignore them, her eyes narrowing as she fought to concentrate...a fight she lost once a small pebble flew up and struck her in the side of the head.

"Ow!" She yelped, rubbing her head as she looked at her advancers; she rolled her eyes in frustration when the sight of gray and piny confirmed to her who it was. "What do you two want?" She murmured bitterly.

The ponies in question were two earth pony fillies, both just a little older than her. One had gray fur with a sliver mane/tail, the former tied back in a braided ponytail with a pink ribbon, sliver eyes which had a pair of blue, half-circle glasses perched in front of them, and a tight necklace of pearls hanging around her neck. The other had bright yet pale pink fur, with a lavender mane/tail that had a white horizontal stripe running through them, the former having a 'princess-y'-looking tiara perched upon, and finally icy-blue eyes that looked just as cold and cruel. Both had their cutie marks, the former's being a jeweled spoon and the latter's being a copy of her tiara.

They were Diamond Tiara and Sliver Spoon, the infamous bane on the lives of the Cutie Mark Crusaders.

Diamond Tiara, the one who had spoken, smirked evilly now that she had her prey's attention. "Did you hear about what happened with the mail service today?"

Dinky frowned in confusion. "No. What's going on?"

Her bully of a classmate cast a certain look at her, raising one eyebrow and lowering the other with a smirk on her face...and Dinky knew what that look meant. She closed her eyes in embarrassment and shrank back against the steps in a vain attempt to hide away from the world. She put her hooves over her face, rubbing her eyes tiredly as she prepared herself for the verbal abuse that was sure to follow.

"What did my mom do this time?"

"What did she do? That klutz delivered muffins to all of PonyVille instead of the mail." the pink filly cruelly chuckled. "No joke. There are squashed muffins all over town and everything!"

Dinky was horribly embarrassed, but not surprised in the least; her mother was always doing things like this, and it didn't help when she and her mother alike were both teased in school for her mother's clumsiness.

"Oh, come on, Dinky. Lighten up. It's funny." Sliver Spoon sneered cruelly.

No. No it wasn't; it was embarrassing and sad. Fighting back her anger, Dinky moved her hooves away from her eyes but still refused to make contact with the others. "Oh, it's funny? It's funny that my mom made a fool of herself again? Ha. Ha." She stated, voice heavy with sarcasm.

"You're just lucky that Mayor Mare's willing to overlook what your klutz of a mother does every time."

That did it.

Dinky rose immediately to her poor mother's defense, locking her eyes on the aggressor's and showing her just how she felt, all the while fighting back the boiling rage inside. She couldn't let her classmate know that her words hurt her, but she also couldn't let her just beat up on her mother like that.

"Stop calling her a klutz!" She nearly shouted.

"Oh. Don't like that, huh?" Diamond Tiara sneered, an evil smirk growing on her face, seeing right through Dinky's disguise of neutrality and knowing that she's affecting her. Unable to resist her cruel desires, she push Dinky further.

"How about clumsy? Or an idiot?" Blow by blow, piece by piece, she knocked down Dinky's emotional defenses. "Or a screw-up? Oh, yeah! A screw-up. Does that make you feel better about your klutzy, retarded mother, *Dink*?"

Dinky could feel the anger reach its maximum point up inside of her, building until she just might explode despite her best attempts to control her heated feelings. Her mother was not retarded! Her mother was not an idiot! She's just clumsy. Sure, she gets easily distracted sometimes, but who doesn't every now and again? Her mother was not an idiot!

Not satisfied with the pain she's caused so far, though, the bully pushed even further, determined to make Dinky break. It seems to be a game to her. A sick, sadistic game.

"You know why her eyes are crossed, right? It's from giving birth to a dimwit like you! What normal unicorn is your age and still can't use magic?" She spat, gloating in victory.

…Dinky can't help it if she's that way! There's nothing wrong with that!

"You're both nothing but a pair of screw-ups and an offense to Ponyville. It's pretty sad that you-"

"MY MOMMY IS NOT A SCREW-UP OR A DIMWIT! AND I CAN'T HELP IT IF MY HORN DOESN'T WORK! IT'S...IT'S THE WAY I WAS B-B-BORN!"

There is utterly stunned silence on the playground. Dinky was there, standing on the steps. Tears were just peaking out of her eyes, like figures peering through windows as she glared in hatred at the bully, breathing deeply and trembling with sadness, embarrassment, anger, and fear. Realizing that everypony was staring at her, she bolted from the schoolyard, leaving behind her book, school supplies and everything; she took off down the path and out the fence gate before anyone could utter a single word.

Just like her mother, Dinky had her own set of problems: she's not clumsy or cross-eyed, but her horn didn't work. It didn't help that the Cakes' kids could already fly and use magic. But could Dinky use magic? No. Not Dinky. Of course not Dinky. That would be too fair!

She continued running until her hooves and heart grew too weary to continue on; sobbing uncontrollably now, the young filly collapsed underneath the shade of a nearby tree, curled up into a ball, and tried to forget that the world even existed. She laid there for what seems like hours as she tried desperately to forget the incident...

"Dinky?"

Dinky looked up and a small smile managed to form on her face, standing up and facing the pony whom the voice had originated from.

It was Amethyst Star, a pink unicorn with a purple and bright sliver/purple mane, her cutie mark being a trio of three diamond-shaped jewels. Her violet eyes gazed down at Dinky with the gaze an older sister would give. She wasn't her older sister, but she very well could've been. The two were peas in a pod; in fact, one time they'd managed to sneak themselves into the Sisterhooves Social as a sibling team. That was probably one of the best days of Dinky's life.

"Dinky, what's wrong?" Amethyst asked, looking concerned.

Dinky, trying not to look weak in front of Amethyst, stood up proudly and displayed the fake smile like a badge. "N-Nothing. I'm fine." She lied.

Amethyst didn't buy it for one second. "Uh-huh. Now when are you going to stop lying and tell me what's happened?" She asked as she sat down next to the filly, putting a comforting arm around the child's back. Dinky frowned in hesitation first...before sighing with defeat, her facade quickly slipping away as she slid down onto her rump.

"I heard about my mom. And the muffins. I...I..." She sighed again. "Diamond Tiara told me about it. And then she called my mom a klutz and a dimwit! Then she started making fun of me because of..."

She couldn't say it, silently burying her head into her arms in shame.

Amethyst, knowing that that little brat made fun of Dinky's horn, now seeks to comfort the poor child. "Oh, come here, Dinky." She said soothingly, giving her sister-in-spirit a brief hug. "Don't listen to what that spoiled brat says; ponies who make fun of others are making up for flaws they see in themselves."

Dinky didn't respond, but one of her ears perks up.

"Let me ask you something, squirt: does she hurt only you?"

Dinky lifted her head away from Amethyst's shoulder, thinking. After a moment passes, she shook her head. "Well, no. She's mean to everypony."

"Then why listen to her?" The pink unicorn asked. "She doesn't have anything constructive to say to you, so why should you even listen to her insults if all they are is negative criticisms?"

Dinky makes eye contact, pretending to understand what Amethyst is saying.

"I shouldn't..." Dinky began, smiling...a smile that soon turned into a frown. "But it's so hard!" Sh exclaimed, standing up and pacing back and forth, trying to drive her point home. "She knows how I feel about my horn and my mommy, so why does she keep insulting me? And it's not just her! Almost all the others have done it at some point! They've all called me 'Dink' or 'Lame-Horn' and they've all said it runs in my family!"

"What does?"

"Being useless! That's what!"

It is at this moment when the town bell rings. Seeing an opportunity to get Dinky's mind away from Diamond Tiara's bad attitude, Amethyst spoke up. "Hey, Dinky; Princess Celestia is overseeing some sort of royal construction near the Everfree Forest. Do you want to go see it with me?"

Dinky managed another small smile. "Sure." She said as they got up; soon they were off to the Everfree, walking hand in hand...or hoof in hoof.

Derpy's House, Dinky's Bedroom Night:

After the long and hard yet relieving day both ponies had, and after a delicious supper and a much-needed bath for both of them, Derpy soon found herself at one of her favorite times of the day: tucking her little Dinky into bed. Tonight, though, she found herself grinning at the excited story a talkative Dinky had about going to see Princess Celestia and the construction along the wall.

"And then she actually let me wear her crown for a while!" The unicorn filly squealed, still almost shaking with excitement. "It was so pretty and big; I can't believe Princess Celestia is so calm

and nice and...well...normal! I always thought she was a big tall god-pony, but she was just like all the other ponies here in PonyVille!"

At that, Dinky calmed down a little. Slowly, her smile dropped and a shadow fell over her face; She'd had a great day, but at 'just like all the ponies here' reminded her of two certain ponies that Princess Celestia certainly was *not* like, the words echoing in her head:

"You're both nothing but a pair of screw-ups!"

Dinky sighed; Amethyst may have tried to cheer her up, but in the end those words stuck. She might never forget them.

"Is something wrong, Dinkster?" Derpy asked, immediately spotting the change in her daughter's behavior.

Dinky looked up into the eyes of her concerned mother. Sadness was returning to her heart, like an unwelcome stranger. She could feel it. But she wasn't going to let her mommy know what Diamond Tiara said; it would be too much.

The two stared at each other for what seems to be an eternity...until Dinky lunged forwards and hugged her mother tightly.

It was different than when she hugged Amethyst Star. Amethyst is more of a general 'Adult Big Sister Figure' in her life, but Derpy was different: Derpy was her mother, and nopony can take that away.

No matter how hard they try.

"I love you mommy."

Derpy had to fight back the tears welling up in her eyes as she returned her daughter's embrace. The two ponies stayed there, just hugging each other. The minutes dissolve into a meaningless time where the only two things that exist in the world were each-other.

"I love you too, Dinky."

For this magical period of time, Derpy forgot about losing her job.

For this magical period of time, Dinky forgot what words had cut her today.

It was as if there was a shield. A Sanctuary. An aura of love surrounding the two. They formed a wall which blocked out all the hate that the world had to offer. Time has no meaning in this mystical place.

There was only each other.

Five Days Later, Evening:

A little less than a week has gone by since that wonderful moment. During the week, Derpy had been extra careful to hide her unemployment situation from Dinky; if her own daughter were to know, then she'd see her mother the way everypony else saw her: A failure. That simply wouldn't do. Derpy wasn't sure how the idea got into her head, but rather than telling her daughter the truth when she had the opportunity, she lied to keep safe from this imagined danger.

It had been a full week since she was fired. Dinky had walked into the living room and noticed the mailbag lying on the couch, and she asked her mom why it wasn't at the post-office like usual. Derpy had the chance to tell Dinky the truth, but the thought of her own daughter seeing her as a failure was not a happy one.

Derpy lied to Dinky and pretended that she still had her job. For a week, this lie had worked well, since Spyro's gift of gold had done more than keep them living; with that gold, Derpy had found herself very rich indeed, though she wisely kept it hidden and didn't spend more than what she needed and a bit of it to help around the house. With the new money, she had been able to buy decent furniture, replacing all the broken ones, get some much-needed construction on her house to fix up a few things she may or may not had caused, and keep her and her daughter happy for at least, as Spyro said, a year.

Speaking of construction, the wall blocking the Everfree Forest from PonyVille was coming along well, though everypony didn't know why it was being built in the first place; sure the Everfree was a spooky place, but were walls really needed? All those scary monsters didn't ever leave the forest, so why need a wall? The only wall Derpy ever had to worry about was the one she now lad blocking her daughter from the truth.

But lies have an uncanny way of being discovered rather quickly, especially between two souls as close as Dinky and Derpy.

Wearing a lopsided chef's hat, Derpy was currently in the kitchen, humming happily as she tried to make some muffins; There was flour all over the counter, chocolate chips scattered all about the floor, and a gallon of milk spilled on the table behind her. Derpy stirred the mix furiously, with a determined look in her misaligned eyes and her tongue sticking out of the side of her frowning mouth, which is still humming a happy tune. She'd been at it for several minutes, but the muffin batter wasn't becoming soft enough! She'd read the directions, too:

Two cups of muffin mix

That's just what she put in! She'd grabbed two nearby measuring cups, filled them to the right measurement (one cup each) with muffin mix, and chucked them into the bowl. Currently, the two cups were clanging about inside the gooey mix filled with water, milk, and chocolate chips as Derpy continued to stir, unwavering in her efforts to make muffins before Dinky gets home. After a while more, the grey-coated pegasus decided that she's probably stirred enough.

Setting down the wooden spoon and picking up the plastic bowl, she walks carefully over to a muffin-pan, trying not to spill the mix. Unfortunately, a white puddle of milk spread all over the floor had other ideas, tripping up the pegasus and causing her to slip backwards and land right on her back.

CRASH!

She recovered just in time to see the bowl of muffin mix falling back down at her face.

SPLOOSH!

"Ouch!"

Derpy sat up, causing her now-sloppy chef's hat to slide off, using her hoof to wipe the mix off her eyes so that she can see. Sticky muffin mix and chocolate chips were everywhere, the bowl lying on its side; the muffin tray clattered off to the left, next to the two cups which Derpy had put inside of the mix.

She despondently frowned at the mess, realizing that she's failed again. Can't she do *anything* right?

Just then, the front door open.

Her frown was replaced with a smile as she licked off some of the mix and stood up. Dinky's home! Walking over to the living room with a cheerful expression, Derpy greeted her daughter happily.

"Hey-a Dinkster! How'd school-?"

She stopped mid-sentence as she saw the young unicorn; if looks could kill, Derpy would be missing a head right about now. Dinky scowled at her with an intense look of hurt and anger. What happened? Was Dinky bullied? Is this because of the muffin mix all over the kitchen?

"What's wrong, Dinky?"

The filly chucked her schoolbag off to the side of the couch. "When were you going to tell me?" She then asked in an accusing tone.

Derpy frowned, confused. The pegasus leaned down to her daughter, concerned. "Tell you about what?" She asked.

"About losing your job."

Oh no. Not Dinky too! Her own daughter? No. She mustn't know the truth! She mustn't find out that she failed again! Desperately, Derpy tried to cover it up.

"W-Wh-What do you mean by that?" She asked nervously, a false smile forming on her face. "I've got a job still. My mail bag's lyin' on the couch! See?" She gestured over to the couch where the mail has been lying all week.

At this, Dinky whipped around to face her mother, hurt and betrayal clear in her eyes. "You're still trying to lie to me? I know everything, mom! I just found out at school. Everypony knew that you had lost your job. Everypony except me! And when Diamond Tiara found out that I didn't know, she started making fun of me and you all over again!"

"W-What do you mean?"

"I mean that last week! She called you a klutz, and...and she said t-that the reason you're cross-eyed was because y-you gave birth to me! She c-called us a pair of mess-ups, mom! Or something like that, anyway!" Breathing heavily, the filly took a moment to regain her cool. Taking a deep breath and letting it out again, glared her mom face to face. "I m-might have Amethyst Star, but she's not like you, mom! I love you! I trust y-y-you! I thought we told each other everything! *Everything*! I thought you would tell me if you lost your job; I even asked you about it, but y-y-y...you lied to me!"

"Dinkster..." Derpy began, though her voice was no more than a whisper. "...I didn't want you to worry, that's all. I...I thought you'd think I was a failure if I told you."

"Well, mom, now I do! But there's more than that! You're a liar also, mom! And you're a...a...a bumbling, klutzy screw-up, too!"

A knife straight into the older mare's heart.

From her own daughter.

Unable to hold back her tears, Dinky past her mother and into her bedroom, crying uncontrollably the entire way, slamming the door shut as hard as she could behind her.

Derpy just stood there, tears forming in her own eyes as she stared at the floor in sorrow; the little filly's hurtful words echo again and again in Derpy's head, like a broken record on a record player, pounding shame and self-hatred into her heart. She turned her teary, wall-eyed gaze to her mailbag lying on the couch; it just stared at her, taunting her with a wordless challenge. It seemed to grin at her she's a worthless failure. Telling her that she's too stupid to do anything right. She's just a loser. She can't do a single thing whatsoever correctly. In fact, if Derpy didn't know better, she'd say her adversary was laughing at her! Except mailbags don't laugh. Nonetheless, it is speaking to her.

She was a klutzy, stupid pegasus and that's all she'd ever be.

Derpy tried to shove the thoughts out of her head, but they continued to beat her over and over, forcing her to submit. She closed her eyes in loss, accepting her daughter being right. Accepting what everypony is always saying.

Accepting that she is just a loser...

...

'...but...but I'm not!' She thought to herself, her sadness suddenly and quickly turning into anger and determination. *'I'm not a failure...I'm not a screw-up! Yes, I'm clumsy and different, but that doesn't mean I don't belong! And I'm gonna to prove it to them! To all of them! And to Dinky...I am not a failure!'*

Keeping that look of determination, she gathered up all the mail that fell out of the bag and shoved it back in, slinging the bag over her shoulder. She went to the nearby dresser and pulled open the arts-and-crafts Dinky used for her artwork, grabbing some blue paper and folding it into...a mail hat.

She'd showed them she was worthy of this job! This life! The right to be known as a true pony! Putting on her makeshift hat, She marched boldly over to the front door and grabbed a lantern, lighting it so that she could see where she's going in the ever-growing night. Then she opened the door and boldly steps out into the darkness, lantern in mouth and resolute in her determination to win back Dinky!

PonyVille, Night:

BPPHHOOOOM!

Spyro sighed with satisfaction once his flaming burp exited his mouth as he headed toward the library, a puff of smoke lazily expelling in the air in front of him. Boy, it felt good to have red meat in his belly again! He had just gotten done stuffing himself on the carcass of that young manticore he had killed that very evening; it was tough meat, but very tasty. That, plus a satisfying drink from the nearby stream (which washed the blood and bits of flesh from his mouth), and the purple dragon was ready for bed.

CRASH!

He immediately snapped out of his sleepy daze once the sound of impact against metal rang throughout the town; he whipped around in the direction of the sound to see somepony messing around with something in front of one of the cottages, the cottage he recognized as Ms. Mayor's house.

'Even this world has thieves, huh?' Spyro asked mentally, crouching down and slowly sneaking up on the thief in a stalking manner. *'Well, if there was any crime that would happen in this blindly-innocent a world, it would be petty theft. I-wait..."*

"*Derpy*?"

The pony jumped in surprise, obviously not expecting anyone to be out at this hour, her crossed eyes expressing worry and alarm. "M-Mr. Spyro?! What are you doing up?" She stammered.

"I could ask you the same question." The dragon stated; his gaze fell upon the crude make-shift hat on her head, then the bag on her shoulder; there was a pile of three to four letters lying, slightly crumpled, behind the mailbox. She was trying to deliver mail, but through the wrong end. "I thought you said you lost your job." He then said sternly, frowning slightly.

Derpy's ears went limp, her eyes becoming sad again as she set her lantern down on the nearby fencepost of the mayor's garden next to her. "It's...it's about Dinky. My daughter..."

Spyro's frown faded into a look of concern. "Why, what happened?" He asked, lowering his head down to her level. "Is everything okay?"

The pegasus shook her head, tears welling up in her eyes. "She...she thinks I'm a...a...a screw-up!" She hiccuped, a single sob escaping her lips. "I-I-I didn't tell her I lost my job because I d-didn't want to scare her, b-but she found out anyway, and now she...she..." She couldn't finish, her voice cracking into soft sobs as she wept in front of the dragon, trying to hide herself behind her wings.

"Ah...I see..." Spyro said solemnly, pity filling his features. He sat down in front of her, using his hand to part her wings and lift her chin with a claw. "It's going to be okay, Derpy. I know it looks bad now, but Dinky doesn't truly hate you; she's just upset and even scared about all this chaos. Just give her some time to come around; you'll see."

Derpy looked up at him with grateful eyes. "That's the second time in a row you helped me." She murmured shyly. "Why?"

"Because that's what friends do. They help each other when they need it."

The pony was struck dumb.

"We're...friends?" She finally asked softly, as if she was afraid it was a mean trick.

Derpy Hooves didn't have any friends; she tried to make some many times before, but her name was soiled to the point where some ponies avoided her out of fear of catching some sort of 'contagious clumsiness disease', and all others laughed at her and/or mocked her to the point of tears. Nopony ever had the patience to be friends with Derpy. Nopony ever looked past the crossed eyes to see the real Derpy. She was and always had been just poor, clumsy, lonely little Derpy...

...until now.

"Of course we are." Spyro told her with a smile.

For the third time today Spyro found himself holding a mare that had practically thrown herself against him, her arms wrapped around the base of his neck. But for the first time, it wasn't out of sorrow or gratitude, but happiness. Derpy was beaming probably the happiest smile the dragon had ever seen in his life, like a child who had just gotten the special gift she had wanted her entire life...which she probably had.

"I never had a friend before." She said softly, nuzzling her forehead against his chest.

Spyro smiled, the adorable pegasus making his once stone-hard heart melt.

And then Savagera bounded down from nowhere. *"Spyro! Emergency in the Everfree Forest!"*

"MONSTEEEEER!" Derpy screamed in pure terror, jumping backwards from both of them; she hadn't seen Savagera yet, and the sight of the shadowy panther-like beast with glowing eyes and stripes was *terrifying* to her...but, as usual, she wasn't watching where she was going.

She backpedaled right into the fencepost, sending it, herself, and the lantern crashing backwards into the mayor's flowerbed with the sounds of shattering glass and smashing wood.

CRASH!

Almost immediately the lights in the mayor's house flicked on, the window where the light was coming from opening soon after. "What on earth is going on out here?!" Madame Mayor snapped angrily, dressed in a striped nightgown and with her matching nightcap covering her pink hair...pink hair? Her eyes fell on Spyro, Savagera, and Derpy, the pegasus pulling herself painfully out of the dirt. "Derpy? What the buck are you doing in my Flowerbed?"

"I don't believe you have a need or right to know." Savagera snarled flatly.

Spyro shot a brief glare at him, turning to the cranky earth pony. "Sorry, Miss Mayor. We're were just discussing something with Derpy; nothing to worry abou-"

"AH! FIRE!"

All four sets of eyes quickly of the flowerbed, where the shattered remains of the lantern had landed against a rock, unleashing the flames from the glass prison and onto the flowers. Almost immediately the plants had burst into flames, the firelight lighting up the area with an Orange glow as the flames devoured the plants.

"My flowers!" Madame Mayor screamed.

Spyro quickly jumped up, his throat and mouth glowing bright blue as he prepared an ice, but Derpy beat him to it, trying desperately to do something right for once. "No! Wait! I can fix it, mayor! I can fix it!"

Thinking quickly, Derpy tried to kick dirt onto the flowers to extinguish the fire, but her aim was, once again, off; she winded up kicking the flowers themselves instead. The flaming bundle of

dying daffodils was sent through the window, over the mayor head, and into the other mare's bedroom. The poor old pony screamed in panic and leapt out of the window, tumbling through the burning flowerbed and landing in front of Derpy, who was cowering in fear and covering her eyes with shame.

"I didn't mean to! I didn't mean to! I'm so sorry, ma'am! I'm sorry!"

"Now is not the time to panic!" Spyro told her, quickly stepping forward. "Stand back; I'll use my Ice Breath to-"

"Oh! I got it! I got it!" Before Spyro or Madame Mayor could say anything, Derpy was already up into the air and pulling a black cloud to the area above Major's home. "I'll make it rain to put the fire out!"

"No!" Spyro shouted. "Derpy, No!"

But it's too late. Derpy, absorbed with being the hero right now, flew up high above the newly-placed cloud. Clenching her hooves and focusing her cocked eyes on the cloud below, she dive-bombed right into the stormy black pillow in an attempt to pour as much rain as she can onto the mayor's house.

BOOM!

The entire world turned blinding white.

When the light faded, all of them recoiled in utter surprise and horror. One second, the mayor's house was only partially scorched from the fire inside. Now the entire building was on fire. Bright, orange-yellow tongues of destruction whipped left and right, entangling themselves all over the house and devouring it in a flood of heat, not a single drop of rain having fallen from the storm cloud.

Spyro wasted no time and exhaled the breath he realized he had been holding full force. A gushing stream of icy mist erupted from his mouth, dousing the nearest flames in a freezing blast; the dragon didn't stop at one breath and bounded into the building, firing blast of ice wherever fire burned.

Meanwhile, Derpy swooped down to the ground and landed next to the mayor, both of them staring in shock at the sight, at a loss for words Suddenly, the mayor smells something really close burning.

"Derpy! Your mailbag!"

Derpy looked down at the bag. Flames seem to be cackling with evil joy as they spread themselves over the mail, which is quickly catching on fire.

"My mailbag!" Derpy screamed as she jumped up in alarm and, not thinking clearly, sprinted full speed down the street and through the town, yelling at the top of her lungs and waking up everypony.

"Help! Help! Somepony help! Fire!"

She flew across the town, causing parcels and letters and all kinds of mail to tumble out of her bag, smoking and spouting short, whip-like strings of flame. The wind caused by her flapping wings sent the flaming pieces of paper to scatter through the air, landing on just about every building she passed, setting everything ablaze.

Suddenly, the mayor's house collapsed by the fire, the building itself tumbling forward and sending massive chunks of fiery debris tumbling through Ponyville, smashing into buildings and the market place, setting them all aflame. One building exploded, sending a giant fireball of debris flying through the air...and crashing back down into the support beams of the wall outside the Everfree. The wooden skeleton section collapsed in flames, crashing against the nearby sets of support beams and doing the same, setting it on fire as well. This continued in the domino effect until the entire wall was sent crashing to the ground in a fiery blaze.

The wall that was almost ready to protect the ponies from the newest threat was burned to the ground.

Seeing a river nearby, Derpy promptly dove into it, putting out the flaming mailbag. She spent a moment submerged under the icy cool water; she didn't want to come up just yet, knowing what would be waiting for her. Soon, once she ran out of breath, she slowly broke through the water's surface and swam to the shore; swallowing nervously, she apprehensively climbed the riverbank and risked a peek at the town.

The sight that greeted her was a scene of complete Discord.

All of Ponyville was covered in flames. The orange-red terror blazing through the sky seemed to laugh and chortle as it hugged the town in a deathly embrace. Up in the air, a black canopy of smoke encircled the sky above. The glow from the flame highlighting the bottom of the clouds, giving the impression of a sea of yellow, orange, red, and black hovering over the town. Everywhere on the ground, ponies were running and panicking, trying desperately to put an end to the madness. Fillies and colts alike are darting left and right. Utter chaos has enveloped Ponyville. Through the crowd of panicking bodies, Derpy spotted the mayor ordering several pegasi to fly up into the sky to stop the spread of fire. They took off without a second thought, valiantly soaring into the black abyss above in an effort to quickly cause rain to put out the fires. Eagerly, Derpy ran up to Major, seeking one final chance of redemption.

One final chance to show that she can be helpful.

One final chance to show her daughter that she is not a failure.

"Mayor! Mayor!"

The mayor turned to Derpy. A look of anxiety washed over her ash-covered face when she saw the perpetrator of this madness.

"Mayor, what do you-"

"Please, Derpy! Not now!" The mayor said quickly as she looked around for more help (aside from the "help" standing right in front of her).

"But this is important!"

"Derpy, whatever it is, it can wait!"

"There has to be something I can do!"

"No, Derpy!"

"But I wanna help! Please let me help!"

"Derpy, we've had quite enough of your so-called help for one day, so shut up, stop helping, and *go away*!"

A flash of lightning blasted across the sky as the mayor's words smacked Derpy in the face, stinging her heart as if they actually were lightning. Immediately following the lightning flash, a light downpour of rain soaked the town with relief, wiping away the fire. Unfortunately, the rain didn't wash away Derpy's misery so much as spread the stain. Relief at this moment doesn't exist to Derpy. To the grey-coated pegasus, the only thing that existed was the overwhelming feelings of defeat and failure.

She goofed up *again*; possibly, she messed up in the largest way that she ever will. Her daughter will never love her now...how could *anypony* love a wreck like Derpy?

Poor, miserable Derpy.

"O-okay, m-m-ms. mayor, ma'am. I'm sorry." She murmured sorrowfully, turning and slowly walking away, head held down in shame.

It was then Madame Mayor realized the pain that her words had caused, but it was too late to take them back now.

Once she was far enough away, Derpy plopped her rump down on the soggy dirt road, sniffling miserably as the rain poured around her; the weather mimicked her mood perfectly: miserable. She opened her eyes and sees her reflection in a muddy puddle, staring back at her with the walled eyes of a klutz.

A clumsy, retarded klutz!

She stomped on her reflection in fury, violently splattering it into wet chunks of mud. Whimpering in sorrow, she collapsed to the ground and begins sobbing, the bursts of tears imitating the jolting rhythm of her broken heart.

Eventually, the mass of panicking ponies died down and formed a crowd around the main square. Murmurs and rumors spread like a flooding river, growing and growing until the whole town was drowned in an whispering undercurrent of talk. Eventually, a light sprinkling becomes all that's left of the rain, which cleared a little to reveal the town's wrecked, soaked, blackened buildings and damaged properties along with its muddied streets beneath the pale moonlight.

And in the middle of it all was Derpy.

Poor, miserable Derpy.

She hid her head, covering it in shame with her hooves, wings, and soggy paper mail cap. She didn't care if anyone saw her; let them look. Let them laugh! She deserved it.

She deserved it for being such a useless screw-up.

Footsteps signaled somepony approach; she peaked out from behind her feathers to see a familiar looking dragon approaching her, his reptilian eyes full of pity. She only whimpered, not of fear but of shame and sorrow, burying her head deeper under her wings, trying to hiding herself from her friend...no...former friend. He wasn't her friend anymore; he'd never want to be friends with her now...

She felt a scaly muzzle press against her head; the soft purring it emitted soothed Derpy's heavy heart, giving her the strength to look up at him from behind her wings.

"Are you okay?" He asked with nothing but care and understanding, pulling away from her a bit. Derpy didn't answer, the tears continuing to run down her face as she looked away. "Derpy. Derpy, look at me." He told her, using her hand to lift her gaze up. "Are-"

"Go ahead. Admit it." She finally hiccuped, pushing herself away. "I'm just a stupid, offensive, screw-up...It's okay...I know that's what you're really thinking of me...everyone does."

"Don't say that!" Spyro snarled with an angry growl. He then softened. "Listen to me, Derpy. It was. *Not. Your. Fault.* It was an accident; if-"

Derpy whirled on the dragon, her eyes full of anger; anger toward herself. "No! It *is* my fault! I'm the one who set the mayor's house on fire! I'm the one who almost burned down all of PonyVille! And that big wall that they was building! I'm the one who did it...I'm the one who screwed up..." Her screams died down into whimpers, her throat raw and dry but sobs coming up none the less. "...*I'm* the screw up..."

"You got that right, you klutz!"

Spyro glared in the direction of the voice, but was unable to pinpoint the location of the shouter; they were all pretty much the same. The crowd that had gathered round was now an angry mob, the shock giving way to anger once realization set back in. The murmuring quickly grew into angry comments, going from faint whispers to the comparably larger noise of a raging river. Derpy shrunk down, preparing herself for the incoming barrage of insults.

"How exactly are we going to fix this mess now, Derpy?"

"You should be ashamed!"

"You're an offense to PonyVille!"

"You're just a klutz!"

"Prize money can't fix this mess!"

"Way to go!"

The crowd's yelling got louder and louder until all that can be heard is a volley of insults and scorning. The mayor tried calming them down, but to no avail; she was drowned out by the sheer volume of hatred pouring from the mouths of practically everypony.

Enough to make Spyro snap in rage, his voice twisting into an draconic roar of rage.

"SHUT THE FUCK UUUUUAAAAAAANNNNKKKKKK!"

The last word flowed into a bestial, purely animalistic roar that shook the ground by it's sheer volume alone; it was a miracle none of the ponies around him were driven deaf by it, though many were brought to their knees in terror by the sheer ferocity and rage. Good. That's where they all deserved to be...

"Move it! Gang way! Comin' through here!" Venom snarled and snapped his jaws at the nearest ponies as he forced his way through his crowd, his serpentine slithering leaving a path for the others to follow him to. Twilight and the other girls were all there, as well as Spike and the rest of the monsters; all of them were covered in shoot and dripping wet, showing the signs and results of working to put the fire out. "Spyro! What in Spode's name happened here?! You didn't sneeze, did you?"

"No...but for once, I wish it *had* been me." He murmured softly, turning a sad gaze onto a sorrowful Derpy.

"Derpy?! What the hay did you do?!" Rainbow Dash exclaimed angrily. "Almost all of PonyVille went up in flames because of *you*?! What the hay happened?!"

"Wait...y'all sayin' *Derpy* did all *this*?!" Applejack exclaimed in shock. "But that's just crazy!"

"I have to agree with Applejack for once." Rarity stated, overlooking the horrid mess before her. Her inner fashion sense was screaming for her to start cleaning, but she forced it down, knowing more important things were at stake here. "Even Derpy couldn't be responsible for a disaster of this magnitude."

"It was her." Savagera spoke up as he appeared from the shadows of a nearby building; Derpy nearly panicked again at the sight, but was too weak to start another disaster. *"She was startled by my presence into knocking a lamp over and releasing the flames. Then it went downhill from there."*

Derpy kept her wall-eyed gaze to the ground. "I...I-I didn't mean to do it...I-I just don't know what went wrong..." She whimpered, cowering before the Elements of Harmony.

Almost immediately Fluttershy was by her side, her wings wrapping her fellow pegasus up in her wings and forehooves, as if to shield her from the hatred around her. "Shhhh...it's okay." She whispered, stroking her mane. "Everything's going to be fine."

"Yeah, all this big flamey mess needs his a fixer-upper, and then it'll be good as new!" Pinkie Pie said cheerfully. "After all, PonyVille's been through worse before, right Twilight...Twilight?"

The purple unicorn didn't respond, her wide eyes locked on one of the structures that had perished in the fire...one in the distance, next to the Everfree Forest itself: the wall the princess had begun construction on. What was going to be a mighty wall was now a pile of smoldering waste, destroyed completely by the flames.

PonyVille's only protection from the monsters...and the up-coming war...was gone...

She did this.

"What have you done...?" She said, her voice a mere whisper...before becoming a shout of rage. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!"

Derpy recoiled in terror, while everyone around her recoiled in shock. "Twah'light! What's gotten into you?" Applejack exclaimed.

"Do you realize what you've done?!" The lavender unicorn screamed, completely ignoring her friends and glaring death at the trembling grey pegasus at her hooves. "That wall was our only protection from the Everfree Forest! The monsters of Prehistoria are loose in Equestria, a *war* is about to start right next door, and you've just destroyed our only protection from it!"

Her words were like oil on the blaze; the angry murmurs and yells of the crowd around them quickly changed into horrified gasps and murmurs of shock and terror.

"Twilight, calm down!" Applejack shouted, grabbing the unicorn by the shoulders. "What's all this 'bout monsters in the everfree?!"

"It's why the princess ordered the wall to be built in the first place!" Twilight shouted, tears forming in her own eyes; it was then Spyro realized she wasn't screaming in anger, but in panic. "Portals to Spyro's home-world are opening up within the Everfree Forest, allowing the monsters from that world to come into Equestria! That wall was suppose to protect PonyVille from them, but now it's gone! We're all gonna die!" She whirled on Derpy, who was just beginning to grasp the situation. "And it's all *your fault*!"

That did it; if it wasn't enough that she ruined everypony's homes and lives, but now she brought about their very destruction. The shame and sorrow consuming Derpy's heart finally burst through the dams, and she made no attempt to hold it back.

"I'm sorry...I'm so sorry...I didn't mean it...I di-...I didn't mean t-to do anything wrong." She whimpered, her body shaking in heartbroken sobs; Twilight's rage almost immediately died, her face slowly fading into one of sadness...and shame. "I just-...it's not m-my fault I'm like this. It's not my eyes j-...just happen to do this...I-I...I...I didn't mean to h-hurt anyone...I just-...I...*I'm sorry-ee-ee-ee-eeeeeeeeee*!"

Before anyone could respond, the grey pegasus blindly took off as fast as her hooves would carry her, wailing loudly in sorrow all the way; Spyro tried to call after her, but the words died in his own quiet sobs as he watched the tears fly from her tightly-shut eyes as she ran from those yelling at her, telling her to go away...telling her to never come back...telling her to just disappear. His own tears rolled down his cheeks as he watched her do just that; disappear far from the hate, far from the sorrow, far from her life as a failure...into...into...

...the Everfree Forest.

The dragon's tears stopped as he blinked in realization of her destination. "Savagera...what was the emergency in the Everfree you began about?" He asked carefully.

"An Anomaly has opened in the trees near the swamp."

Twilight and Spyro's eyes dilated in horror. "DERPY! DERPY, WAIT!" They both shouted after the fleeing pegasus, the former galloping after her as fast as her hooves would carry her, while the later took to the skies, his wings beating constantly as he outraced the unicorn.

'What have I done?' Twilight mentally whispered, tears coming to her own eyes. *'What have I done?!'*

"Hey! Wait for us!" Pinkie and Rainbow Dash called as pony, dragon, and monster alike quickly followed in suit.

Everfree Forest:

The Everfree Forest.

Since the founding of Equestria, this dark and foreboding forest has haunted the dreams and legends of ponies and all other races everywhere. It was the largest section of untouched wild land on the entire continent, covering more than a *fourth* of Celestia's entire kingdom, slithering in and stretching to cities throughout the land and going far beyond the borders and the horizon itself.

So why did the ponies avoid it instead of take advantage of its natural bounties? Fear of the alien. And what was so alien about this forest?

It was completely normal.

As all those who live in Equestria know, this planet's natural cycles are manually taken care of by the ponies that inhabit it: Unicorns use their magic to change the seasons, Pegasi move clouds and create weather patterns, and Earth Ponies tend to the growth of plants and care of animals on the ground. But the Everfree Forest was different: it did all this by itself. Unlike the rest of this planet, the Everfree was perfectly natural in comparison with other worlds: the weather and seasons changed on their own like normal, plants grew and thrived without the help or interference of ponykind, as did the animals that lived in it. To most races, this would be perfectly normal, but to ponykind and its blinded innocence, it was downright terrifying. Even more so thanks to it's appearance and inhabitants.

From above it was a sea of green, stretching on for all eternity and resembling pretty much any regular forest...but beneath the canopy, it was a terrifying place; trees and plants beneath the canopy fought and strangled each other over even the smallest patches of sunlight: a rare necessity in this dark land, leaving the smaller, weaker saplings to starve and die in the dark undergrowth. Down there, several hundred feet below the suffocating canopy, dense vegetation thrived on the dank forest floor and carpeted the putrid dirt with its tentacle-like web of roots, providing miserable but sufficient hiding-holes for the many creatures which inhabit this forest.

The creature of the everfree were even scarier and savager than the forest itself. Many of Equestria's most horrible and feared monsters lurked in the darkness of this forest, eagerly awaiting for a foolish outsider to set foot in it: Dragons, which territories and treasures of vast size, were a far and wide-spread species. Manticores, great lions with bat wings and scorpion tails, were a more common threat to travelers. Timber Wolves, canine-like beasts made and grown from the trees they live beneath, hunted in packs to bring down tougher prey. These were but just a few of the many mythical and monstrous beasts living in the Everfree.

And then even the beasts themselves could succumbed to other predators, though they not be animals. The lower vegetation itself was alive with poison and toxins of all kinds, from the infamous Poison Joke to their carnivorous cousins the Fang Floras, from the smallest of creatures to the largest of beasts, from the top of its canopy to the roots of its trees, the Everfree Forest is definitely, by all accounts, was dark and dangerous deathtrap for the inexperienced and unprepared.

Any creature from the even darker depths of Prehistoria would feel right at home here.

But none of the forest's dangers meant a thing to the sobbing pegasus running blindly through the trees, vines lashing at her limbs and face as she stumbled clumsy through the foliage, her eyes blinded by the rivers to tears flowing down her cheeks. Would it matter if she was going to be eaten by monsters anyway? No one would care.

Why would anyone care? She was just a bumbling, useless, harmful, klutzy, stupid screw-up...and she would never be loved...

...and the cliff right in front of her wasn't going to help at all.

Derpy's sobs turned into screams when the ground suddenly disappeared under her hooves; she was sent tumbling straight down the steep wall of a mud-covered slope like a ragdoll, smashing and tumbling against the sharp rocks and dead tress roots all the way down.

Thud!

"Ow!"

Smack!

"Ouch!"

Bang!

"AAAAAAAAAAAAHHH-!"

SPLOOSH!

The still, sludge-like waters of the thick puddle splashed up in a heavy, almost slow-motion manner as Derpy went head-first into the filth, disappearing under the surface. The bog regained its stillness for a few seconds before the pegasus slowly pulled herself up against the bank, collapsing on the edge. She just laid there, her bottom-half still beneath the black murk, and her top half completely covered in it, the thick goop running down her body like molasses, covering her face, head, and body.

She just laid there on her left side in silence, the mossy mud her head was resting on feeling like the comfiest pillow in the world, tempting her greatly to just slip into much-needed subconsciousness. She didn't cry anymore; she didn't have any tears left to cry...nor the strength to lift her head. She just laid there, buried in the mud; the rain continued to pour around her, washing away some of the mud on her head and face, though her eyes remained closed. The only sign she was even still alive was the slow, almost robotic movement of her sides with each breath. She might have well been non-existent.

'Would anypony even notice if I was gone to being with?' She asked mentally, almost expecting an answer. *'Would anypony even care? Why would they? Nopony one likes me...not anymore...'*

Her sides heaved once with one deep sigh, one last, single tear running down her right cheek. She felt sleep taking over her body, her senses going numb as she felt her mind slipping into darkness...but she didn't fight it. There was no need too. She could just lie here in the soft, cool mud and let the darkness drown out her pain.

Then all would be perfect.

Then came the light.

Derpy frowned, trying to squeeze her eyes tighter; the rain had washed off the mud covering her eyes just enough for the glare of whatever was causing that bright gold/white glow to bleed through her eyelids, stopping her blessed falling asleep short. She groaned in aggravation, trying to block out the light...only to find, with herself more alert, a soft and strange humming sound in the air; the sound one would think light shining through glass would make. Both the light and the sound drove sleep from her mind, causing the ache and pains of her body and heart to, once more, strike her full force.

Gritting her teeth in frustration, she gave an irritated groan as she lifted her head up, letting her eyes get accustomed to the sudden light before giving it a good, deathly glare at whatever was disturbing her potential escape...which quickly dropped into a face of pure wonder and awe.

There was no word the pegasus could think up to describe the...thing...before her. It was *huge*, as big as the average buildings in PonyVille; it was like a giant void of golden/white light, roundest and largest in the middle, while narrowing out into points through the top and bottom, like a star pulled down from the heavens and brought to earth. Floating around this 'void' were thousands, if not *millions*, of what resembled shattered yet smooth shards of crystal or glass, floating object in an orbiting fashion around the 'void' in a formation that formed out a diamond shape.

It was a light in the darkness of Derpy's existence; a beacon of hope and happiness for her sorrow-filled heart, it's beauty and wonder calling out to her silently...a call she answered.

There would be no real harm; she wasn't going anywhere anyway.

Keeping her cross-eyed gaze locked on the wonder, she slowly struggled to her hooves, pulling herself out of the mud; the thick slop slid off her body and splattered all around her as she weakly stood up, her legs shaking slightly, but she kept her eyes on the 'void' before her. Taking a moment to steady herself, she stepped up out of the puddle and slowly walked up to the 'void'; she was, of course, cautious about this thing before her. It could be dangerous...but she needed to *be with it*; the wonder and awe in her heart was drowning out her pain, and she needed to be with this beautiful thing before her.

She needed to touch it.

After a few more cautious steps, she found herself standing no more than a foot from the 'void'; her heart was hammering in her chest with both fear and amazement as she craned her neck

up to look at the wonder before her; the shimmering hum was now much lighter yet louder. A chill ran through her fur as she lifted her hoof, reaching toward the light before her. Just one touch, to feel light itself against her hoof...

"GET AWAY FROM THAT THING!"

Derpy nearly jumped ten feet in the air, landing back down on her hooves with another wet sploosh. She whirled around to see Spyro bounding down the cliff at fast as his legs would carry him, followed by Twilight, Applejack, Rarity, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, Spike, Neublar, Harry, Venom, and Savagera.

"What in Equestria is *that*...?" Applejack whispered as all but Spyro stopped at the bottom of the cliff she stared at the sight before her.

"Ohh! It's sparkly, and shiny, and even shardy! That's a three-fer!" Pinkie Pie giggled with delight.

"It's beautiful!" Rarity squealed, her eyes glistening like the crystals in the light.

Spike eyed it with his own fascination, his tongue hanging from his mouth hungrily. "It's like a piece of heaven..." He murmured.

"Those aren't gems, half-wits!" Venom snarled. "They're shards of a shattered Dimensional Barrier that the Snakeasaur smashed to pieces!"

"*That's* an Anomaly?" Twilight asked in shock, staring at the confirmed 'Anomaly' with a mix of awe and fear.

Neublar nodded, glaring at the portal before them all as he shield the ponies protectively with his arm. "Yeah, and a big *one* at that." He said darkly. "A therapod the size of an Ursa Major or even bigger could come through *that* thing."

"And we've got plenty of those on Prehistoria, let me tell you." Harry stated flatly.

Fluttershy squealed in fear, ducking behind Applejack.

Derpy frowned in worried confusion as Spyro bounded over to her. "Spyro? What...what are you guys doing here?" She asked softly, as if it was wrong for them to be here.

"No time to talk!" Spyro told her, grabbing her forehoof with his hand and pulling her along. "Come on! That thing is dangerous; we gotta get outta here and fast, before-!"

The Anomaly exploded in a rainbow of dark energies.

Spyro froze in horror, eyes wide with his fear. *'No...not this...NOT THIS!'* He screamed internally.

All of the girls and guys alike, even Savagera, cried out/roared in alarm and were thrown to the ground as the once calm and tranquil void of light transformed into a blazing, twisting maelstrom of power and primal fury; the entire anomaly transformed into what resembled a spinning black hole, great light tendrils of multiple colors creating a spinning hurricane around the tunnel to darkness in the center, a great suction force suddenly pulling everything into it. All the girls screamed as they and the monsters clung to the earth to keep , Applejack having to use one hoof to keep her precious hat on, while Savagera shielded her from the storm of dimensional energy. Neublar used his arm to keep Fluttershy pinned and protected from the suction. Venom coiled his front half tightly around Rainbow Dash, his back half coiled in a death grip around a tree. Harry clung to Pinkie Pie's tail with six of his eight legs, using the last two to pray in a comical manner. Spyro used his wings to pin and shield Twilight, Derpy, Rarity, and Spike, his claws clinging to the earth for dear life.

"WHAT'S HAPPENING!" Twilight screamed over the roar of the thunderous void.

Spyro gazed on her sadly, his soft voice still reaching her ears despite the noise.

"We've all been chosen."

The dark black hole in the center exploded back into a brilliant, sliver-white glare, and from the sun-like void erupted nine great tendrils of multiple elements, each of different colors and element. These massive tentacles...for that's what they were...lashed about and toward the group before the anomaly, each ready to claim a native prize for its summoner.

The first to reach forth was the red tendril; it was made of dark and malevolent fire of red and black, blazing brightly with a hellish demonic light. The tip of the tendril suddenly molded and formed into the head of a therapod dinosaur, with draconic horns on it's head and fiery orange eyes...the latter locking directly of Fluttershy. The head roared a dark and malevolent roar of hellish might and sound before lunging forward...and swallowing her and Neublar whole.

"FLUTTERSHYYYYYYYY!" Twilight screamed as she watched both pegasus and amphibiod disappeared into the flaming jaws, their screams of pain dying out in an echoing void as their bodies were suddenly bursting into flames and reducing to ash in the flaming jaws. Seizing it's prize, the red tendril slid back into the void, disappearing altogether.

"HELP MEEEEE!" Rainbow Dash's scream shot through Twilight's ears. She quickly turned to see her and Venom being attacked by the orange tendril; this tendril appeared to be made out of a solid beam of pure electrical energy, colored orange and generating blasts of lightning that blasted anything nearby. The tip formed out into the head of a saber-tooth tiger, roaring a caterwaul roar similar to Savagera's (though much more powerful) before lunging forward and seizing the cyan pegasus and green cobra, the two screaming/shrieking in pain as they bodies were torn to atoms by the lightning of the tendril, which were consumed by the tiger, who disappeared into the void.

"GIT AWAY FROM MEEEE!" Applejack cried in terror as the green tendril lashed out at her and Savagera; this tendril was made of what appeared to be vines, roots, and earth made of pure,

glowing-green energy, wisps of the power shaped like leaves floating about the air near it. The tip was the heavily-horned head of a ceratopsian, whose jaws opened wide as it consumed both the shadow-panther and the earth pony. Savagera roared with rage as he madly slashed at the energy, but he and Applejack were consumed by the energy, roots consuming their bodies and reducing them to dust, which the tendril swallowed before disappearing into the Anomaly.

"I'M TOO YOUNG TO DIEEEEEEEE!" Pinkie Pie screamed as she and Harry found themselves at the mercy of the teal tendril; this one appeared to be, much to Twilight's shock, pure magic. Not unicorn magic, but pure, untempered, *dark* magic, the glowing energy also sparkling with magical power. The tip formed out a cobra's head and frill, which breathed out a stream of magic, dissolving their bodies into pure magic, which it drank greedily like water; their screams could still be heard as they disappeared down the magic serpent's throat, the beast itself retreating into the void.

The remaining five tendrils aimed their attention to the last group: Spyro and his friends he was shielding. The yellow tendril lashed forward, but Spyro angrily retaliated with a blazing fireball to the face; the tendril, which appeared to be made out of a thick, gloppy slime and possessed the face of an ugly ape, roared in pain as it thrashed about, trying to extinguish the flames.

Taking advantage of the distraction, the purple tendril, the one made of a beam of solid purple light and having the head of a T-Rex, smashed Spyro in his blind spot, sending him flying away and smashing against the tree, going limp with pain; almost immediately it then turned it's sights to Twilight, who screamed in terror as it lunged.

"NO!" Spike cried; summoning all his baby dragon strength, he jump forward and shoved his surrogate mother out of the way. the purple tendrils jaws clamped down on him milliseconds after, causing him to scream before he exploded into purple light.

"SPIKE! NOOOOOO!" Twilight screamed in pure anguish as she watched the purple beam devour the glowing remains of her assistant...and son, with a much ferocious vigor as well before disappearing into the void. The lavender unicorn sobbed in utter sorrow, just acknowledging the yellow tendrils attack on Rarity right when it struck.

"OF ALL THE WORST POSSIBLEEEEEEEE..." Rarity's dramatic exclamation changed into a cry of agony as her entire body melted into a disgusting white liquid, which was swallowed up by the yellow tendril.

"GET OFF HER!" Spyro roared with rage, throwing himself at the yellow beam...only for the black beam, the largest and most terrifying of them all, to clamp down on his back. This one resembled the long neck and head of a skeleton dragon, the spiked vertebrae shrouded in a pitch black mist of pure darkness, which started like a mane at the skull, just behind the long, blade-like horns. The glowing red balls of fire that served as the eyes glinted with dark pleasure at snagging the greatest prize here, it's dark shadow coiling around and consuming the dragon.

"I'LL FIND YOU ALL! DON'T WORRY! WE'LL GET OUT OF THIS ALIIIIIIIIIIVE!" Spyro called to Twilight right before his head joined his body in being consumed by living shadow, the black tendril slowly slithering back in just after the yellow tendril, both disappearing into the light.

"Twilight?"

Twilight snapped out of her gaping sorrow and turned her gaze to Derpy, the last one remaining besides her. Their were also two last tendrils left; the grey one and the blue one...the former of which was making it's way to Derpy at that moment. It looked to be made out of a purely-circular tornado, the fierce winds whipping out the head crest on it's raptor's head.

Derpy, however, didn't even look at it as she stared at Twilight...and gave a sad smile.

"I am sorry. I truly am."

Tears flowed down Twilight's face as she watched the raptor's head consume the grey pegasus, who kept that same sad smile on her face as she gaze apologetically back, even as her body slowly dissolved into wind, which was inhaled by the grey tendril before retreating back into the void, leaving the unicorn pony all alone with the blue tendril, which turned it's gaze to her. This tendril was made out of glowing blue snow, icicles sticking up all over it; the was that of an ape, but with a face of proud nobility, rather than a disgusting drooling beast like the yellow tendril was.

Twilight defeat even try to run; her friends were all gone down that thing...and she wasn't going to leave them; if they were to die...then she'd die too.

"Just make it quick." She whispered.

The ape-head merely stared at her for a while before opening its jaws; Twilight cried out in pain as she felt her body suddenly stiffen and plummet in temperature...turning into ice, then shattering into tiny shards and being sucked into the mouth of the tendril. Even as her body dissolved, she could still feel herself being suck into the mouth, merely bracing herself as she was sent flying down the long, dark blue tunnel of cloud, picking up speed and speed and speed until stillness was non-existent, her very essence being dragged through boundaries between universes.

The blue tendril retreated into the void, which then spun super fast before collapsing in on itself with a flash of white light, sealing itself back up and leaving the Everfree Forest normal once again.

That was all Twilight remembered before everything went black.

TO BE CONTINUED...

14. Derpy Of The Dinosaurs - Part 2

(A/N: FINALLY! So much to write and so little time now, I decided to split it up into sections. I really need to stop taking breaks between chapters or I lose track to time.

My main problem was getting too comfortable doing other things and losing track to time; by the time I started, I was already a month behind, and this chapter was a difficult one to write when under pressure, so after weeks of frustration and no real progress, I decided to just cut it in half and write the next half at a more comfortable pace.I know this section's unbelievably short, but you guys wanted me to post up after all this time, and that wasn't going to be soon with this mess. So I'm going to post the other half of this chapter up later, this time getting to work right away, and then later I'll probably merge the two into one. So just enjoy this bit for now and hopefully we won't have to wait as long for the next one.)

EPISODE XII: DERPY OF THE DINOSAURS

PART 2: WELCOME TO PREHISTORIA - SECTION 1

"And from the sheer power of his rage, hate, and thirst for vengeance, the darkness, fear, and death of the surrounding realms merged to form the world that he would forever rule; a world of Jungle Law and Primal Force that all, from the greatest kings and armies to the weakest paupers and beggars would forever fear and tremble underfoot of. From all corners of existence, from the dawn of time, to the depths of fantasy, to the farthest reaches of space, the most powerful, deadly, and feared creatures of the universe gathered to him and his new world, drawn in by the promises of eternity and survival. Those that survived and set a foothold in this new world became the new rulers and inhabitants of this primal world...and proved themselves worthy to join Tyrone in The Eternal Hunt as predators of Prehistoria."

— from the writings of the Great Wyrm Wisdorakrcaniss, which can be found in Warfang's Royal Hall of Records.

Cold.

She was so cold.

Twilight awoke lying on her back in an imprint of her body in the foot-deep snow as the demonic winds gnawed at her bones. It was a cold so fierce it sapped her soul while choking the very life from her. She couldn't see at first, her brain still in shock over what had occurred. She had to

take very slow and careful movements to avoid loss of consciousness. She groaned as she, almost passing out from doing so, pushed herself over onto her stomach; she almost retched from the impact on her gut, the simple act of rolling over now a death-move in her condition. She laid there, face buried in the snow, allowing herself a couple minutes to calm her ever-aching body...before lifting her head up and finally managing to open her eyes.

Pictured before here was a land that howled and screamed of ice and death as great winds ripped along it's surface. It was a sea of white that seemed to go on forever stretching to the edges of the world...or at least to the range of large, jagged mountains of ice and rock that twisted and bent the landscape to their will. The sky was full, darkened by the passage of many clouds that saw to shower the whole place in light fluffy snowflakes. It was dark, the little light that did remain reflected off the white canvas, illuminating the horizon. Dotting the endless white were pine-like and other winter trees and large boulders, both battered and torn from the eternal winter of death.

Her thin layer of lavender fur offered no protection from the snow-filled blizzard now tearing at her flesh with a icy savagery; she whimpered as she tucked her limbs around her body, tears of pain and fear forming in her eyes as she shivered bitterly against the cold.

Where was she? What happened? There was PonyVille and the wall burning to the ground, then chasing Derpy into-

It all hit her like a punch to the gut. The anomaly in the Everfree, the elementals devouring her friends, being pulled into the endless void-

Her eyes widened in horror. Pure, untainted, horror. She wasn't in Equestria anymore, was she? She weakly lifted her teary gaze skywards; the winds were clearing the clouds...*by themselves*...just enough to reveal the night sky. The stars were beyond any kind or color she had ever seen before, creating a vast cosmos of endless beauty that not even alicorns could create...but what really caught her eye was the obvious sign that confirmed her fears.

Two moons.

They hung in the sky like the mismatched eyes of Discord staring down on her. One was a pale-red in color, and was much larger than it's smaller, pale-green twin.

Twilight swallowed the bile building in her throat, her stomach twisting in fear and realization.

She was in *another universe* entirely; *completely* separated from *everything* she ever knew.

She was in Prehistoria.

That dark, horrible feeling of complete helplessness slowly flowed through her veins, silent panic quickly overcoming her as she laid helpless in the snow. There was no way back, as far as she could tell; the other side of the anomaly was no where in sight, which either meant it was

closed or it had thrown her to some random spot on the planet. How was she going to get back?! She was stranded here, alone, in the middle of a frozen, monster-inhabited nightmare!

A-And her friends! They were pulled in as well! She could feel tears building in her eyes when she imagined what ungodly fate they must be experiencing. Where they even in this arctic with her?! Perhaps they were stranded in a volcanic firepit, or a primordial jungle full of poisonous plants and blood-thirsty predators, or an endless desert with no food or water at all! It didn't even need to be in the same world! Maybe the anomaly sent them into deep space lightyears away from any planet, or into an alternate dimension where the laws of reality and physics didn't even exist!

They were Gone. Maybe even...for go-

'NO!' Twilight mentally shouted, shoving those thoughts out of her mind. *'I can't give up! My friends are out there...or...dea-no! They need my help! I...I have to try!'*

Taking a moment to collect herself, she tucked her legs under herself and, using what felt like every ounce of strength she possessed, slowly forced herself up of the ground; the sudden lurch upwards (or what felt like one) was all her aching stomach could take, and the unicorn couldn't stop herself.

She violently vomited then and there, her greenish-brown puke staining the pure white snow in front of her; she nearly collapsed into her own waste then and there, falling painfully to her knees as the wind whipped against her body, sending her mane and tail flapping crazily in the snow. She sobbed in pain, letting the snow coat her fur and her tears freeze over the fur on her cheeks, already begging to whatever gods that ruled this universe for salvation.

Then, she opened her bleary-wet eyes...to see the first lifeforms of Prehistoria she had even seen, other than Spyro and the guys.

From the snow around the pool of her vomit emerged many species of arthropods and other invertebrate, those adapted to the icy cold, either naturally or elementally: tiny blue crabs the size of a small plate, with four arms with tiny pincers, sliver fuzz stuffing their joints to insulate them. Sliver caterpillar-like worms the size of gardner snakes that glowed with white bio-luminescence. Black scorpions almost a full meter long, with wasp-like heads, spike-tipped antennae, and long, lizard-like tails ending in draconian spikes. Just to name a few.

Twilight's eyes widened slightly from their half-lidded state, her drowsy, hurting mind doing its best to find fascination in these little lifeforms...alien lifeforms, she realized. The tiny creatures squeaked and hissed among themselves as they scuttled or slithered about, snapping up or squabbling over chunks and bits of already-digested food. A scorpion snarled angrily as it snatched away one of the crab's piece, the crab squeaking angrily in response. A worm near them sucked up the sludge with a straw-like mouth, nearly getting trampled by the multiple legs of another scorpion creature.

All these little scavengers devouring anything they can and do anything to get it in this bleak wilderness.

Suddenly, just as instantly as they appeared, they all shrieked/squealed/hiss loudly before quickly disappearing beneath the snow, digging back into the frozen earth as fast as they could go, some even dropping their prizes to once again vanish beneath the ice.

Twilight frown in confusion, wondering why they ditched a free lunch...until a deep and loud animalistic growl rumbled through the air behind her.

She froze, her mind and body seizing up in terror; the type of terror that one only feels when death in right around the corner. Trembling violently, she quickly turned her head to look behind her, teary eyes wide with horror at the sight behind her, standing no more than ten feet away.

They were large repto-mammals, five of them in total, and each were as big as Savagera, standing nine feet tall at the shoulders and measuring over thirty feet in length. They resembled a heavily-built mix between a dinosaur and a wolf, mostly resembling the ancient reptilian Gorgonopsid, their powerful, muscular bodies and limbs both draconic/saurian in structure. Their saurian hands and feet had three toes/fingers each, each one ending in a thick, deadly claw made for tearing through *bone*. Their long, thick, saurian tails didn't end in anything fancy; mostly used for balance and turning at high speeds, but could double as powerful clubs if need be, while their necks were thick and powerful, but a short in length. Their heads were almost as big as Twilight was, and were similar to a Gorgonopsid's, but thicker and bonier, like true dinosaurs, with large, reptilian eyes, reptilian nostrils instead of a dog's nose, a pair of large horn-like eye crests that grew backwards across their heads like dragon horns, and powerful jaws filled with sharp, thick teeth, including two huge, dagger-like saber-fangs each over two feet long. Their skin was thick and course, like a dinosaurs, and had long yet thick dorsal spines lining their spines, from their horns down to their tailtips. Their skin was dark-blue in color, with a sliver-blue underbelly, and black tiger-like stripes that ran down their legs and tail, filling and color their lower legs and tail black, while their fangs, claws, horns, and spines were also black in color, their horn and spines coated in a smooth layer of ice, making them appear even longer and sharper. Their eyes were a bright icy-blue in color with slit pupils, glowing in the dim light...

...and were glaring murderously into Twilight's, their teeth bared as the deep, gurgling, reptilian growls rumbled from their throats as they crouched forward, ready to pounce.

'RUN!' Her very essence screamed at her. It didn't matter where. *'JUST **RUN**!'*

So she did.

Not even noticing the pain it caused, the lavender unicorn turned tail and bolted for nowhere in particular, crying out in terror. The Dinarovar, as was their species, in front, which was bigger and had larger horns, the alpha male, unleashed a powerful, dragon-like roar before charging after her in a dog-like gait, the others following with their own roars, their massive bodies shaking the earth as they charged down this new prey.

Twilight ran for the grove of pine-like trees nearby, her predators hot on her tail; despite their size, they were incredibly fast...and they were gaining quickly. *Lose them*

Into the trees, go where they can't! Her instincts shouted. So she did; it was the only thing that could save her at this point.

Suddenly a glowing missile of ice energy, like a magic icicle, exploded just inches from her hind hooves, making her jump and scream. These beasts didn't need fur to survive in the land of ice. They wielded the element as their own, practically being one with it. They fired several more Icicle Missiles at her, and it took every ounce of speed and agility the poor pony had to keep from being impaled by the five-foot projectiles.

She reached the trees, quickly diving between two closely-packed ones; the alpha Dinarovar lunged after her, but its thick shoulder were too wide for it to fit after her, its jaws of death snapping only inches from cleaving her in half. It and its pack members roared with rage before backing up and charging into the trees, smashing and tearing through the dead plants with a murderous ferocity.

Twilight continued to flee until her feet touched air and she fell forward landed on her stomach, tumbling forward across the rocky slope of a cliff, screaming as they tumbled down it's rough ledge; the stones scraped painfully at her skin as she tumbled down like a fur-covered ball, falling a good fifty feet before crashing into the ground. Thank goodness a pile of snow made for a less-than-bone splintering landing. But it wasn't a pile of pillows either. Pain racked her body as she landed on her stomach, the urge to barf again coursing through her digestive system as she laid there, gasping for air, which had been smacked right out of her.

She looked up to see that she had landed in a large gorge that opened up into a large arena-shaped hole opening, which was thankfully down out of the reach of the wind, on one side was the rocky, snow-coated cliff she had just tumbled down, which was lined with dead trees and cold resistant bushes and ferns. What made it a gorge was the huge glacier that had run up into it; it was so high Twilight couldn't see the top, and so wide she couldn't see it's end. Not that she would be able to beyond the cliff.

The angry roars of the Dinarovars shook the air, along with the sounds of shattering wood and ripping earth; since they didn't fit, they would make themselves fit! Chunks of trees went flying over the cliff's ledge as they smash each and every one in their path; the flying chunks of trees forced Twilight to scramble away, her body burning in protest.

An angry howl announced the arrival of even more danger, and she looked up to see another group of about two dozen predators approaching, their den disturbed by her presence. They were wolf-like canines, but were as large as full-grown horses; their fur was a light bluish-sliver in color, making it hard to see in the blizzard, along with white stripes and yellow eyes; their backs, spines, head, neck, and tail were lined with long, sharp icicles that covered long dorsal spines that ran down their spines from their foreheads to their tailtips. Their claws and sharper than most canines, and they possessed saber-like fangs jutting down from their top jaws.

Lupice, wolves of the arctic, hunters of the snow.

Another crash from above and the Dinarovar burst forth from the trees above; without even the smallest hesitation, they came bounding down the almost-straight down cliff, their claws tearing at the rocks at they threw themselves down the slope, not even slowing as they reached the bottom and changed their attention to the new arrivals. The wolf Lupice howled their own challenge and charged forward, moving at even faster speeds than the other creatures, the two sides meeting in the middle.

Then the slaughter began.

Even the carnage Savagera brought to Sweet Apple Acres was nothing compared to what Twilight was in the middle of; roars of rage and pain filled the air as the creatures tore at each other with a blind murderous rage, blood of different hues staining the once-beautiful snowy landscape. Claws tore through flesh, jaws ripped off entire limbs, bone shattered, screams of death and roars of rage rent the air, blood spilled over the ground like rain. They didn't even acknowledge the existence of their prey anymore; blood had been spilled, and they wanted more. To tear flesh from bone. To spill blood across the earth. To hear their victims scream their death throes. To just unleash the wrath of the Snakeasaurus upon those who dared to anger him.

As is the rage of Prehistoria.

As is the rage of Tyrone.

Lightning flashed through the night skies, illuminating the dark lands and revealing the bloodbath that the young unicorn was in the middle of, running about like a chicken with its head chopped off, stumbling about blindly in tears as death reigned all around her.

Death.

So much death...

This was Tartarus at it's finest.

Their was a sickening *CR-R-RUNCH!* nearby, and something heavy and wet came splattering down against Twilight's side, knocking her off balance; she stumbled back, her head whipping down to see...the head of one of the Lupice, the shreds of what was left of its neck and esophagus splattered over the snow around it, its eyes now lifeless and staring forward, jaw broken and limp...and the blood now drenching and dripping from Twilight's fur and hair, the stench of it surrounding her.

She screamed in pure horror and anguish, her cries drowned out by the carnage surrounding her. *'NO MORE!'* She mentally screamed, her voice too busy screaming to shout for her. *'PLEASE NO MORE! MAKE IT STOP!* PLEASE*!'*

SLASH! *SSSPPKKITTT!*

"GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHH!"

Her scream tore through the air and her throat alike, just as the flesh down her side was torn open by the massive claws that tore open her right side and flank, ripping it open and sending her through the air by the sheer force of the blow; the Dinarovar that had decapitated the wolf had gone for her, catching her off guard as she panicked. She was sent crashing against the snow, landing in a pool of monster blood, her own now spilling from the enormous gash in her right side.

Twilight couldn't even scream anymore, her mouth frozen in an silent scream as air wheezed out desperately; never in her life had she felt such *agony*. Her entire body screamed in pain, her eyes dilating as she laid there, zoning in and out of consciousness, laying in a pool of her own agony. Pain. Pure, untempered, pain. Nothing existed. There was no Twilight Sparkle. There was no Prehistoria. There was no such thing as a time before pain.

There was just *Pain*.

Then something else came into existence.

Earthshakes.

And...cannon fire?

The earth shook as a massive monster came charging into the battle from the opening in the glacier, its bellowing roar drowning out all sounds and drilling even more pain into Twilight's dying body. It was another Lupice, but twice as large as the others, almost as large of the alpha Dinarovar. It's colors were of a much darker shade, and it's had a large, singular, shark fin-like dorsal horn on its forehead to symbol its leadership. It's eyes held an intelligence that could match a sentient being, it's tooth-filled jaws opening and twisting into a hate-filled roar.

There was another explosion like cannon fire from within the opening, which echoed from the cave's interior, and from the mouth of the icy cave flew what resembled a miniature missile that flew through the air at high speeds, leaving a trail of smoke behind it, and exploded against the Great Lupice's hide; the dog-like beast roared in pain and rage, stumbling to the side before turning around, roaring angrily as it's smoldering calf sizzled with embers of burnt fur.

The Lupice and Dinarovars stopped fighting immediately, all of them turning as one to see the shared enemy they now faced together, a collective growl echoing throughout the canyon.

Twilight could only turn her eyes down toward where the monsters where now charging toward, watching as more of these projectiles fired forth from the cave, which glowed orange from the flash of igniting gunpowder.

Just like a cannon or gun.

She managed to keep her eyes open long enough to see the monsters engage a group of strange, armored humanoids with large swords and cannon-like guns before she went limp, her sides weakly heaving for breath as she felt herself grow even colder, her life blood slowly escaping through her wounds...the snow slowly surrounding her...the noise of the battle sounding distant and fading...her vision slowly going black...

...No...*No*! She couldn't...she *wasn't* going to die here!

Acting on pure instinct ingrained into her blood through thousands of generations of magic, the mare drew her power forth and pushed it toward her forehead. Teleport away while they were all distracted! It was a fool's idea, but the best she had at the moment. She just needed to-

A shard of something metallic blasted through the air and struck her horn right when the spell activated.

She felt something crack before the world exploded with light.

BOOM!

Neublar panted as he bounded across the rocky groundscape, his fur already drenched in sweat from the unbearable heat; his kind was naturally adapted for cooler weather, and being amphibian-mammal fushions, water and damp air were a needed resource...and this fiery landscape provided no such luxuries. His knuckles and feet had naturally thick skin and padding to protect them from the earth's roughness, but even they already had a fair share of bloody cuts and scrapes received from this barren, rocky landscape. Gashes and cuts decorated his sides and arms, his naturally green blood running from them and across the ground with each bound.

He was in pain, slowly burning up, and his pegasus companion, who hung weakly onto his back with her hooves around his shoulders, was suffering even worse from her injuries, whimpering and weeping quietly as precious life blood flowed from the slashes in the flesh of her stomach, back, and thighs, running down onto his back, staining his blue fur red.

But it was little wonder why they were is such hellish conditions considering their location. The land they were stranded in was barren and desolate, covered with dust and dirt that was constantly whipped up by the howling winds. Across the landscape and horizon the ominous orange glow of volcanoes, lava rivers, and blazing fire could be seen, providing a demonic lighting to the sky heavily choked with ash and smoke above. Static from the sheer number of particles in the air, fused with a dark, malevolent aura of power that flowed through this nightmarish world, caused forks of red lightning to flash high overhead, adding to the harsh, imposing atmosphere to the land. Surprisingly enough, life thrived here as it did everywhere else on Prehistoria, though not as abundantly: Bare, skeletal trees charred and covered in ash were among the plant life that grew here, along with multiple heat and drought resistant plants that could squeeze through an existence. The creatures that inhabited that wasteland were

twisted, fire-elemental monstrosities powerful and durable enough to live in such malevolent conditions.

But thankfully Neublar knew how to escape from this hell; this land was thankfully confined to an island known as The Inferno, and the way to the mainland was the land bridge: a string of islands called 'Diablo's Teeth', island-hopping through the shallow waters being the only way to the mainland. It was dangerous, but it was their only hope to escape this fiery cauldron of death.

And the demonic beast chasing them down.

It was the same gorgonopsid-like creature that Twilight faced down, but of different adaptations. Instead of dark blue, This one was a dark red in color, and with flaming orange eyes instead of glowing icy blue; also, its dorsal spines were ignited with blazing orange flames, said flames also blazing within its throat...and this one was *twice* the size of its Ice Counterparts, standing at 15 feet in height and measuring 40 feet in length.

Neublar knew what they were: Dinarovars, one of the most common and widespread predatory species of this world.

The monstrosity roared as it bounded after the amphibiod and pegasus, the ground shaking beneath it's feet, explosive fireballs blasting forth from its jaws...until one struck home.

Neublar bellowed in pain as one of the fireballs grazed his upper rightleg, burning away the fur and scalding the skin. The leg stumbled from the pain, tripping the amphibiod and causing him the slam chest-first into the rocky, ash-ridden earth; the pegasus on his back was sent flying forward, landing sideways with a crash and tumbling across the dirt. She slid to a stop before curling up into a ball, whimpering in pain and sorrow as tears ran down her face and blood from her wounds.

Her whimpers was followed by the bellowing roar of the monster: a throaty, guttural bellow that sounded like something out of a nightmare somehow managed to drown out the wind and thunder for a brief instant, the great beast charging forward on all fours, its canine-like gait surprisingly fast for something so large.

The monster raised one of its powerful arms to strike the downed frogape, but Neublar quickly hopped up and launced himself to his right and avoided the swing; the second he touched-down he bounded right back, roaring angrily while slamming his right fist as hard as he could against the monster's side. The creature roared another of its ugly roars as his fast smashed into its almost-bony hide and drew a stream of oozing black blood.

It swung again in a fit of rage, aiming to smash the skull of the amphibiod that stood just less than half its height, but before it could complete its attack Neublar antlers glowed and crackled with blue, green, and pink energy, which formed a swirling orb of this power between them; then, roaring angrily, he fired a large bolt of Neublanic Energy from between his antlers that struck it square in its face. As the beast reared up and clawed at the green/blue/pink lightning-like energy that danced across its head and shoulders, Neublar flipped forward and

planted a powerful kick in the creature's chest, causing it to roar out as it toppled backwards with a crash.

Neublar landed back on all fours, panting heavily as he glared at the limp beast. *'Go. Please don't make me end your life to save our own.'* He mentally pleaded, praying that it would do just that.

But if he should've remembered from battles past; the forces of Prehistoria do not yield so easily, even toward one of its own.

With speed almost too fast for the eye to follow, the monster swung back up onto its feet and lashed out with one of its barbed tail in one fluid motion, and Neublar cried out a bellow of pain as it tore across his foreleg. The open wound stung furiously in the volcanic air, but he forced it down, knowing he could even pause for a second to acknowledge or tend to it.

In his own single fluid motion, he threw his arms up, and short yet thick claws erupting from his fingers, slamming said claws down deep into the forelimb of his opponent; grabbing onto the very bones within the arm itself, he bounced back with the arm still in his grip and, bracing himself as sturdy as a rock, tugged back with every ounce of his mighty strength and both wrenched and pulled the arm as hard as he could.

CR-R-R-RACK!

With an explosion of black blood and a roar of pure agony, the entire right forelimb was ripped clean off its shoulder; the Dinarovar continued to roar in pain, it's soulless eyes dialating as it rear back again and using its left arm to grab and claw at its wound, as if it could end its pain by removing the area where it came from.

Neublar shook his head, not in exaggeration...but in self-shame. He then turned away from the beast, wanting to end it here and now, when his gaze met Fluttershy's...and he froze; she had seen the entire battle...and what he could do.

The horror, sorrow, and betrayal on her face would haunt his dreams for years to come.

Why...why her? Why her world? What great crime did they do that prompted the unleashing of this prehistoric hell upon ponykind?

Why would she have to learn the truth about him and his world?

It wasn't right.

SPLACK!

His world exploded in pain, and he roared in it as the monster's rock-hard tailtip speared him through his left shoulder, punching all the way through and erupted out the front with a blast of

greenish-blue blood. It then wrapped the tip around the shoulder and yanked it's tail back, pulling its prey back with it and throwing it over itself in a whiplash motion.

There was a horrendous tear of flesh and a crunch of bone...and the thrown Neublar joined the monster in losing a limb.

CR-R-R-RACK!

Neublar screamed: the horrible, screeching, agony-filled scream of a dying animal, which was cut off as he crashed into the rocky ground, the sound and pain of crunching ribs adding to the chorus from hell, blood erupting in a fountain of gore from his gaping wound. His left arm and shoulder landed in a pool of lava no more than twenty feet from him, bursting into flames upon contact, the intense heat vaporizing the flesh almost instantly, while the bones lasted only a few seconds before crumbling into ashes.

There were no words that could describe the agony that he felt as he stumbled backwards, his remaining hand grabbing at his missing shoulder; no matter how many times he experienced it, the bone-splitting, body tearing pain was something he could ever get used to...but thankfully it helped him learn to bear it. Using experience and forcing the pain down, he jumped away just in time to avoid another swipe, the clawed foreleg smashing into the rock where he stood mere milliseconds ago.

There were also no words that could describe Fluttershy's emotions as she watched her companion battle the horrific beast before them. Before this, she had lived a life of innocence and peace, only disturbed by minor conflict and fear from time to time; the worst experience she ever had was at Cloudsdale's Junior Flight Camp, and that was years ago. The scariest thing since then was the time she and the girls went to get that dragon to move from the mountain, and that was one of the 'soft' Equestrian dragons. Other than that, life had been gentle, beautiful, kind...safe.

But that dream was no more.

Her image of her beautiful world had forever been torn to ribbons by the fierce claws of this dark reality, where evil and death made up existence in this monstrous realm. The big and gentle friend she met on the train from Canterlot was a *killer*, born and bred, just as every flora and fauna in this world; a world that existed only to destroy all others.

A World of Death.

"S-S-S-Stop..." She sobbed quietly, her voice completely drowned out by the roars and screams of primal battle, tears spilling down her face. "P-P-P-Please...s-s-stop f-f-f-fighting...*P-P-P-Please*..."

Boom...Boom...

She paused crying, opening her bloodshot eyes to see the puddle of muddy water next to her shake, the soft vibrations causing the surface to ripple with each thud.

Boom...Boom...

The earthquakes were soft...but they were growing, louder and louder with each step...step...

Boom...Boom...

The pegasus' eyes dialated in horrified realization: They weren't earthquakes.

Then the Dinarovar approaching the down amphibiod didn't even have time to react before a beast four times it's size grabbed it in jaws almost as big as it was.

CRUNCH!

The reptilian creature could only shriek and thrash it's death throes as it was lifted high off the ground and shaken like a ragdoll, teeth as large as swords punching through bone and armor, crushing both into pulp, and Fluttershy could only gape in absolute horror up at the *monster* before her and the amphibiod.

It was an enormous beast that resembled a large, wingless dragon, standing at a horrifying forty feet tall and measuring a hundred feet in length, weighing in at an impressive fifteen tons; it towered over them, standing taller than Ponyville Main Hall. It's body reminded her slightly of Spyro's, though it was much bulkier and more heavily built, like a living mountain of flesh and bone, and it walked on its hind legs, which were the normal saurian shape and of incredible muscular build, ending in the large, three-toed, reptilian/bird feet, each toe ending in a thick, sharp claw. The arms were strong and powerful, but very short in comparison to the rest of its body, ending in two large-clawed fingers. The massive saurian tail was built like a cedar tree, making up just half it's body length, but didn't end any special; the neck was short, solid and thick, perfect for holding up its massive head; running down the spine was a covering of crocodile-like plating and spikes that covered it's back, starting at the forehead and ending at the tailtip. The head and jaws were massive and dragon-like, but much 'boxier', bony and solid, being made for crushing bone (and quite possibly rock and steel!), possessing thick jaws full of teeth longer than a pony's leg, silt reptilian nostrils near the end of it's snout and silt ears at the back of its head, bony eye-ridge that morphed out into stumpy horn-like shapes to match it's back plating/spikes, and large draconic eyes. It was a dark brownish-green in color, with pure black tiger stripes pouring down from its top, a sandy-gold underbelly and lower jaw, and golden eyes with semi-slit pupils.

Fluttershy was laying at the feet of one of Prehistoria's most feared beasts: the mighty Prehistorian Tyrannosaurus Rex.

She could feel the blood drain from her form as she saw it's cruel, monstrous eyes turn their fiery gaze upon her and Neublar, her limbs going stiff and her wings clamping to her sides. She began to hyperventilate, her lungs heaving for breath, fear unlike anything she ever felt before

consuming her soul. Her vision faded back and forth before she slowly slumped to the ground and landed onto her side, a small splash coming from the monster blood pooling next to her as she landed in it.

But the Rex didn't attack; it merely snorted in disgust at the fallen pony before turning away and heading it's own way, its footfalls shaking the land while the bloodied carcass of the Dinarovar swung limply in it's jaws. It had the meal it had been hunting for, and the half-dead amphibiod and that pathetic winged rodent-spawn werenot worthy of an honorable death by it's time and energy.

Let them die slowly and the land claim them; they deserved such a death.

Neublar stayed still and waited until the footsteps started to fade before he limped over to Fluttershy in a three-legged gait; his shoulder was making soft sounds of tearing muscle and cracking bone as the limb was beginning to grow back, as amphibiod limbs can when lost. His shoulder had already stopped bleeding, his minor wounds already sealed up and major gashes healing as well.

With his remaining hand, he gently cupped Fluttershy's chin, turning her gaze upward toward him. "Fluttershy? Fluttershy, are you okay?" He asked gently.

"...H-H-H-Hel...H-H-Help..." She whimpered between sobs, to no one in paticular, her body shaking from trauma as she wept openly. "...H-H-Help m-m-me...p-p-please."

Neublar stared at her in silence, the volcanic ambience and distant thunder being the only noise around them. He had to fight back his own tears at the sight of her: an innocent soul, pure and kind, now forever stained and torn by the dark claws of reality. *Why*? Why was this happening?! What did Equestria or any of the worlds out there that had perished before do to deserve such a fate?!

And why did he have to be born on the darker side of the battlefield?

His hand tightening into a fist, his sadness turning into anger. Curse them! Curse the one behind this to the Void! He swore that they would play for this: pay for corrupting and harming this perfect world!

"Come on." He told her, forcing down his anger. "We still have a chance to end this and escape."

He then scooped her up gently with his good arm and put her over his shoulder, letting her hang over his shoulder like a infant, her head resting against his own as her forehooves gripped onto his good shoulder. Making sure she was steady, he began for the ocean again, following the scent of distant seawater as he limped across the fiery landscape.

They would escape. One way or another.

'Come on, Spyro. I know you're out there. I know you're gonna save us.'

A deep, snuffling sound was what stirred Rainbow Dash out of unconsciousness; hot, smelly gusts of air blasted into her face, the putrid stench doing nothing to help the nausea she was currently feeling. She was laying on her back, limbs and wings spread out like a snow pegasus, her mane and tail splayed around her head and hips. She groaned in pain, slowly turning her head so that it faced upward, and she weakly opened her eyes a crack...

...to be greeted by the sight of two large, wet nostrils on a beaked reptilian face snuffing her form, a deep rumbling moan coming from the boned maw.

"GAAAH!" She cried, eyes snapping open in fright as she jumped backwards, nearly crashing into the trunk of the nearby tree as she did so.

The Triceratops calf she had startled squalled in response, the cow-sized hatchling quickly turning tail and waddling away from the rainbow-maned pegasus, back toward the large herd of it's kind a good distance away.

The adult Triceratops were *massive*, *twice* the size of their earth counterparts, measuring sixty feet long and weighing in at fifteen tons; their heads alone were as big as a semi-truck without the trailer. They were a dark, muddy-brown in color with lighter-brown underbellies and black splotches on top, their round-pupiled eyes being a dark orange in color. They were pretty much the same as the earth versions, other than having evolved to a much larger size and a more advanced, 'updated' form: Their frills were now lined with miniature spikes to protect their necks even more, along with intimidating 'eye-spots' to frighten off rivals for the larger males, their eye horns being longer, stronger, and sharper as well. Their backs were also protected by a layer of bony plating that ran from behind their frills to their tail tips, also covering their hips and shoulders.

Rainbow Dash's jaw went slack, eyes widing to the side as dinner plates.

'Wait...that...that was...a...a dinosaur...' She mentally stammered, unable to believe what she just saw; something she had only seen in movies before. *'Those are...*dinosaurs*...FREAKIN'* DINOSAURS*! WHERE THE BUCK AM I?!'*

It was then she was able to look about herself to see to answer said question. With a few flaps of her wings, she gained altitude until she was at least two hundred feet above the ground, able to see the beautiful sight before her; she was in the middle of a large savannah, reminding her of a movie she had once gone to see with Fluttershy: The Lion King, if she remembered correctly. The land was a sea of gold and green, the grasslands stretching as far as the eye could see, dotted by the occasional trees or grove of trees, the latter usually around a watering hole or the great river that was running across the landscape. The sun shined brightly, casting the giant shadows of the clouds and...the islands and chunks of land floating through the sky far above, some of these islands being as far down as Rainbow Dash was, but all orbiting the main

planet within the atmosphere, making them inhabitable; most of these islands were flat on top, and had trees, plants, miniature mountains, and even ponds, or rivers flowing over the edge. Some, like one in the far distance, were as big as Canterlot Mountain itself, and other could be *much* bigger, while others were as small as the huts in PonyVille. Each were uinque.

'Land in the Sky...Land...Sky...Sky...Lands...Skylands! Those must be the Skylands that Spyro and the guys live in...which means, the planet below must be..."

The recent events hit her like a truck.

'Oh, Celestia! The girls! The guys! I g-gotta find them! I-'

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNNKKK!

"AAAAAAAHH!" The pegasus screamed, snapping her wings shut and letting gravity do it's thing; she dropped down just milliseconds before the jaws of the Prehistorian Wyvern swallowed her whole, the 90-foot long, 10-ton, 120-foot wingspan draconian soaring overhead as it's prey escaped. Missing it's snackbite, the black, horned, barbed-tail-arrowed reptile circled back around and descended upon the Triceratops herd, blazing yellow fire pouring from it's mouth, sending the herd bellowing and stampeding across the grasslands, shaking the very earth itself.

'I'm gettin' out of here!' Rainbow Dash cried mentally, diving for the grove of trees in the opposite direction of the attack; she ducked and weaved amongst the branches, desperate to put distance between the monsters...only to run into a familiar species.

BONK!

CRASH!

"Ow..." Rainbow Dash groaned, sitting up in the small clearing she had crashed into, rubbing her head and looking up to see what she had crashed into.

"Ouh...Nakiso, terene bizo..." The Emperor Cobra in Ophionaga form groaned, rubbing its head with it's hand. At first glance she thought, with hopeful glee, that it was Venom, but it wasn't; it was more muscular and buff than Venom, and the colors were of darker shades, the green of it's markings flowing across it's body and limbs in stripe-like splotches.

"Fangasukanikara! Tora kali nako, isik baril-seeko acka!" Another Emperor Cobra shouted angrily at the first as it emerged from the nearby bushes. This one was the same build and size as Venom, but instead of blue horns/crests/spines, it had black, along with blue markings running across it's body...and it's right eye had been ripped down the middle, a clalis and exposed pink flesh of a scar splitting the right side of its face being what was left of the eye.

The two saurian-snakes turned their gazes to Rainbow Dash, their surprised looks turning into angry scowls.

"Oh, crap..." The rainbow-named pegasus squeaked.

"Shokala! Neeza baru kobaka zarik parka?" The black-horned one, apparently the leader, snapped at her; she didn't respond, unable to understand what he (she was certain it was male, judging by the voice) was saying in this completely alien tongue. "Zarik parka?! Zarik! Zos kzearara towas askha belee! Zarik, parka!" He shouted angrily, snarling with exposed teeth and flexing fangs, orange eyes burning with anger at being ignored.

"Raku bakira, zala runu kiaha Bladizasuisra!" The second one barked in a deeper tone as it stomped its right foreleg on the ground demandingly, glaring down on her.

Knowing they were about to tear her to pieces if she didn't respond, Rainbow Dash went with the first idea that popped into her thick skull:

"Uhm...uh...Keka boru, zahi momo besas?" She made up on the spot, grinning hopefully while praying it would work.

The two Emperor Cobra stared wide-eyed at her for a moment...before pouncing on her with fangs and claws lashing, roaring with rage.

"AAAHH! WHAT'DISAYWHAT'DISAY?! HEEEEELLP!"

"Fwuaka! Mooka sala pegasus drani!" Shouted a familiar voice; The two stop attacking, letting Rainbow Dash look up to see (from her position with her head clamped in the bigger ophionaga's jaws), much to her relief and delight, Venom approaching them, the familar snake also in ophionaga form. The larger one snorted, promptly throwing Rainbow Dash with his head toward Venom bitterly; the pegasus squeaked in surprise and pain as she landed rather roughly on her side, skidding against her friend's foot.

"And where the hay have you been?!" She coughed as she lifted her head up, wiping her bleeding mouth with her hoof.

"You're welcome." Venom stated darkly, his glare never leaving the other ophionaga standing before them. "Next time, if you don't know what to say, don't say anything...especially around these two."

"Friends of yours?" She asked before going to lick at her wounds.

"Unfortunately, yes." He then growled, stepping over the pegasus to face his fellow serpents, who were glaring at him with dark smirks. "Members of my old pack; the one with the bad eye's Bladizasuisra, the pack's leader, and the big guy's Fangasukanikara, Bladizasuisra's right-hand." He told her, glancing back briefly.

Rainbow Dash paused licking, nearly biting her mental tongue trying to mentally pronounce their names. "So...Blade and Fang, huh?"

"Yep." He stated, turning back to 'Blade'. "*So, how's the eye? Giving you trouble hunting without help, I hope.*" He snarled darkly in the Prehistorian Tongue.

Blade merely grinned back evilly. "*I've been hunting just fine; in fact, it's *finally* growing back, though it took quite a *long* time. You really know how to leave a scar, Venozarukaroka.*" He hissed with dark amusement, running a claw over the scar adorning the face; sure enough, Venom could see were the clalis was starting to peel away, revealing a freshly-healed eyeball underneath. He then glanced at Rainbow Dash, who huddled timidly behind Venom, not wishing to recieve anymore injuries. "*So, *this* is the sentient life of the new world that's opened up to Prehistoria, and you've been indulging yourself with? It looks like something out of a female human child's television show! I bet they already have you saying please and thank you with their magical pixie powers."

"*Even the company of pastel ponies is better than that of you *bastards*.*" Venom snarled with rage. "*I never regret the day I left your pack, even if it landed me in Emperor Cegustus's arena. And for the record, I'm every bit confident Rainbow Dash here can kick *your* sorry ass with her 'magical pixie powers' anyday of the week.*"

"BLAAAAAAARRRGGHHH!"

All three ophionaga glanced toward the target of the conversation; Rainbow Dash's naseua had finally caught up with her and she couldn't stop vomiting right then and there. The green plant matter splattered across the dirt, it's spewer fighting back tears of pain.

The black-horned emperor cobra scoffed. "*Hardly. Even if she *is* a magic-elemental, which I doubt thanks to her air-elemental scent, she would have to face down both Fangasukanikara and my entire pack as well as I.*" He stated coyly, idly picking his claws together. "*But enough of these pleasantries.*" He then growled, turning deadly serious as he and Fang took on battle stanches, ready to pounce. "*You better have a good excuse for trespassing in my territory.*"

But to that threat, Venom merely smirked and turned his gaze out to the open plains. "*Let's just say we were given formal invitations.*" He stated, just as the first thunder clouds began rolling across the sky, a distant roar accompaning the lightning.

Blade's eyes, both good and bad, widened in response, as did Fang's "*Wait...she's-?!*" He began, stunned. "*No. You're bluffing.*"

"*She is, and I don't spin lies with that great a chance.*" Venom stated. "*So if I don't kick both your asses myself, you can be sure *SlashFang himself* will if you harm one multi-colored hair on this pegasus's head.*" His cocky pride then turned into stone-hard serious. "*The Anomaly dropped us off here; she had no intention of trespassing, and you can be sure to the Inferno that I had no desire to return to this shit-pile. So we'll just go and leave you to yours...unless you want to risk it.*"

"*Better accept that offer, Bladizasuisra.*" Fang finally spoke, his deep voice holding a wisdom that his hulkish form hid well. "*This pathetic traitor is not worth it.*"

Blade glanced back briefly at him before he glared at Venom for a long time...before merely snorting in digust and stepping back. "*A *pet* like yourself isn't worth my time. Take your whore and go, before I'm tempted to risk SlashFang's wrath and kill you both.*" He growled in pure hatred.

Venom didn't say anything; he kept his glare on them as he merely turned and scooped up Rainbow Dash with his mouth around her waist, like a cat would do with it's kitten; the cyan pony whimpered slightly in pain from the jerk in the motion, but otherwise remained silent as her reptilian companion reverted back to serpent form and slithered away out of the trees and out onto the open plains, breaking his glare away from his Ophionaga brethern, who Rainbow Dash in turn saw disappear back into the forest.

"V-Venom...?" She asked weakly.

"Ymmph?" The snake responded, his mouth still full of pegasus.

"...I want to go home."

That statement...so soft, weak, innocent...it made Venom pause, looking down sideways to see the pegasus gazing up at him, her eyes full of longing and sadness. An innocent type to sadness, one that made you feel homesick or lonely when you saw it in someone else.

'So do I...' He thought sadly as he stared back with pity, before looking away and continuing through the undergrowth, slithering through the plants. *'Except that I* am *home, like it or not.'*

BOOM!

The snowy gorge lit up with a tremendous explosion of purple and white energy that none of the Hunters had seen before, and for their leader that was saying something since she had seen and fought quite a lot in her time. Every Hunter, Lupice, and Dinarovar turned their heads to the sound and sight of the explosion of unicorn magic, something that not every creature gets to see...or live to tell the tale!

Then came the shockwave; the blaze of purple/white magic blasted out in a pond-ripple effect, striking the Lupice and Dinarovar full blast and throwing them through the air like a bunch to giant ragdolls. The monsters screamed their death throes loud and long as the blast tore the flesh from their bones, their bodies burned and dissolved into ash by purple flames.

As the magic blast faded away, the rain of dozens of charred bones joined the snow in covering the ground.

"What...the...hell?" One of the Hunters, all of whom had dove for cover behind a fallen tree, whispered in disbelief.

The sight that greeted them was that of a graveyard: dozens of roasted-black skeletons littered the now blackened landscape, smoke rising from the charred bones and burning plantlife caught in the explosion. Even the rocks and face of the cliff had been blasted, piles of broken pebbles being what remained of once mighty, inmovable boulders, and a waterfall of snow and rock still pouring over the new edge of the cliff, now six feet deeper than before.

Then their eyes fell onto the source of the explosion.

Laying far across the field was the limp, seemingly-lifeless body of Twilight Sparkle, her form completely motionless as she laid splayed out on her left side in a pile of her own blood, minus her very weak breathing. She had a horrible claw-ripped gash running across the side of her torso, splitting open wide across her flank, and ending at her right 'knee'; her right cutie mark had been ripped clean off her body, along with a good deal of muscle. Her mane and tail were both matted and torn, splaying out about her in blooded ropes of crusty hair, it's silky sheen long gone. Her face hadn't escaped harm either; across the right side of her face was a long yet thin slash made by a single claw, crossing over her miraculously-unharmed eye, which was closed along her other, blood streaming down her snout from the gash...and her horn, which was now no more than a lagged, broken stump of lavender bone. The blood leaking from the horn possessed a strange, pinkish glow to it, mixing with her normal blood on the chasm floor.

Then the leader of the Hunters, a female, slowly stepped out from behind the log and, pausing cautiously for a moment, made quietly for the half-dead unicorn. Ignoring the calls and warnings of her companions, she slowly stepped around the bones of the monsters they had been fighting moments ago, making her way to where the child-sized pony laid...kneeling down next to her; she was certain it was a female, thanks to the hair style and facial structure.

It was thanks to these factors that she could tell this little unicorn was a Soul-Bearer: a living soul with thought and morals, not just some wild instinctive animal, regardless of it being a equine like their horses...and, considering her soft, defenseless form, knew she wasn't of Prehistoria, and she wasn't going to let another child, pony or not, perish to this god-forsaken realm as well...

Being as gentle as she could, she scooped the broken and bleeding Twilight up in her arms, cradling the pony to her chest like a small child, her five-digit right hand coming around to gently cup her cheek. Twilight stirred, weakly cracking her eyes open to see a pale, hairless face, hidden partially in a helmet of blue dragon-like armor with orange horns and spikes, looking down at her, gentle, pony-like eyes staring into her own with wonder and concern.

Then she went limp and remembered nothing more.

Gasping quietly in surprise when the pony went limp, the Huntress grabbed the side of the cape of the tunic fastened to her armor, pulling it around herself and Twilight in a protective, warm embrace, cradling the wrapped up, sleeping pony cozily before returning to her companions, who surrounded her in their own wonder and confusion, staring at the little creature in their leader's arms.

From the glacier top high above, an *enormous*, serpent/dragon-like beast with massive dragon wings, horn-like crests, long tentacle-like antennae, an incredibly long saurian tail ending in a deadly tailblade, and armor-like emerald scales watched the pathetic mortals below with hatred and disgust, his large, curved claws scratching angrily against the ice and his ancient godly-draconic form silhouetted against the crimson moon above, red other-worldly light and flames blazing from his demonic crimson eyes.

Then his eyes then fell upon the unconscious pony below, and they narrowed in dark thought, a deep, hellish growl rising from his throat.

'*Equestria...It has been a long time...*'

Then the silhouetted dragon deity spread his massive wings and took to the skies, his wingspan blocking out the moon and his flaps creating a great windstorm, red lightning blasting across the skies as he took off faster than a jet could follow; with a mighty bestial roar as mighty and powerful as a volcano, he unleashed a crackling stream of white light and crystal-like energy fragments from his gaping, saurian, tooth-filled jaws. The beam struck a point in the air in front of it a hundred yards away, exploding and splitting open the very fabric of Time and Space, spinning together and bursting forth to form the newly-born Anomaly, glowing brightly in the dark night sky.

With another triumphant roar, he shot through the crystalline portal like a flash of green and black, and the Anomaly sealed up right behind him, closing the portal between worlds once more.

"*Beware, Alicorns of the Sun! I have returned!*"